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WITCHBLADE®

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DIGITAL EDITION
US
TOP COW UNIVERSE

CITY OF NEW YORK
DETECTIVE

WITCHBLADE®

created by **Marc Silvestri**, **David Wohl**, **Brian Haberlin** & **Michael Turner**

New York City Police Detective Sara Pezzini's life was forever fractured by her father's murder. Cold, cunning, and hellbent on revenge, Sara now stalks a vicious criminal cabal beneath the city, where an ancient power collides and transforms her into something wild, magnificent, and beyond her darkest imaginings.

Previously... Still reeling from the warehouse massacre where she first came into contact with the Witchblade, Sara explores the mystical gauntlet's power, and the pleasure using it can bring. In her moment of vulnerability, the mysterious Ian Nottingham comes to guide Sara in the ways of the ancient weapon, revealing more layers to the supernatural world Sara has entered. In Ian's haven "The Keep," a supernatural space opened by a "sickle key," Ian has been showing Sara even more, distracting her from the Witchblade's true nature. Now, Sara returns to investigating the threads that tie the Witchblade to the death of her father, setting her on a dark path that may lead to answers, or her destruction.

"My Father"

Written by **Marguerite Bennett**
Line art by **Giuseppe Cafaro**
Colors by **Arif Prianto**
Letters by **Troy Peteri**
Edits by **Marc Silvestri**, **Matt Hawkins**
and **Elena Salcedo**

Cover A: **Giuseppe Cafaro** and **Arif Prianto**
Cover B: **Roberta Ingranata** and **Warnia Sahadewa**

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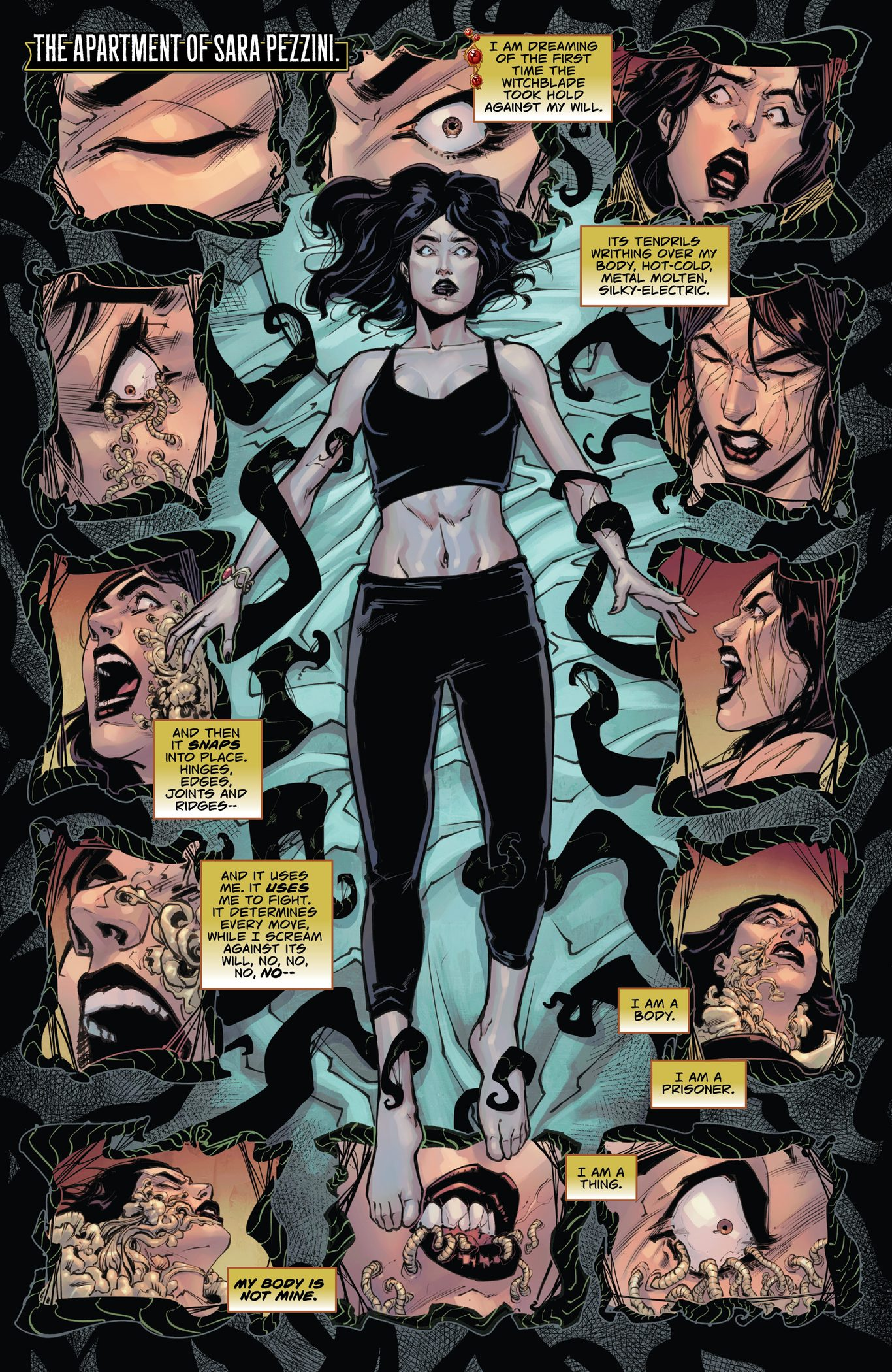
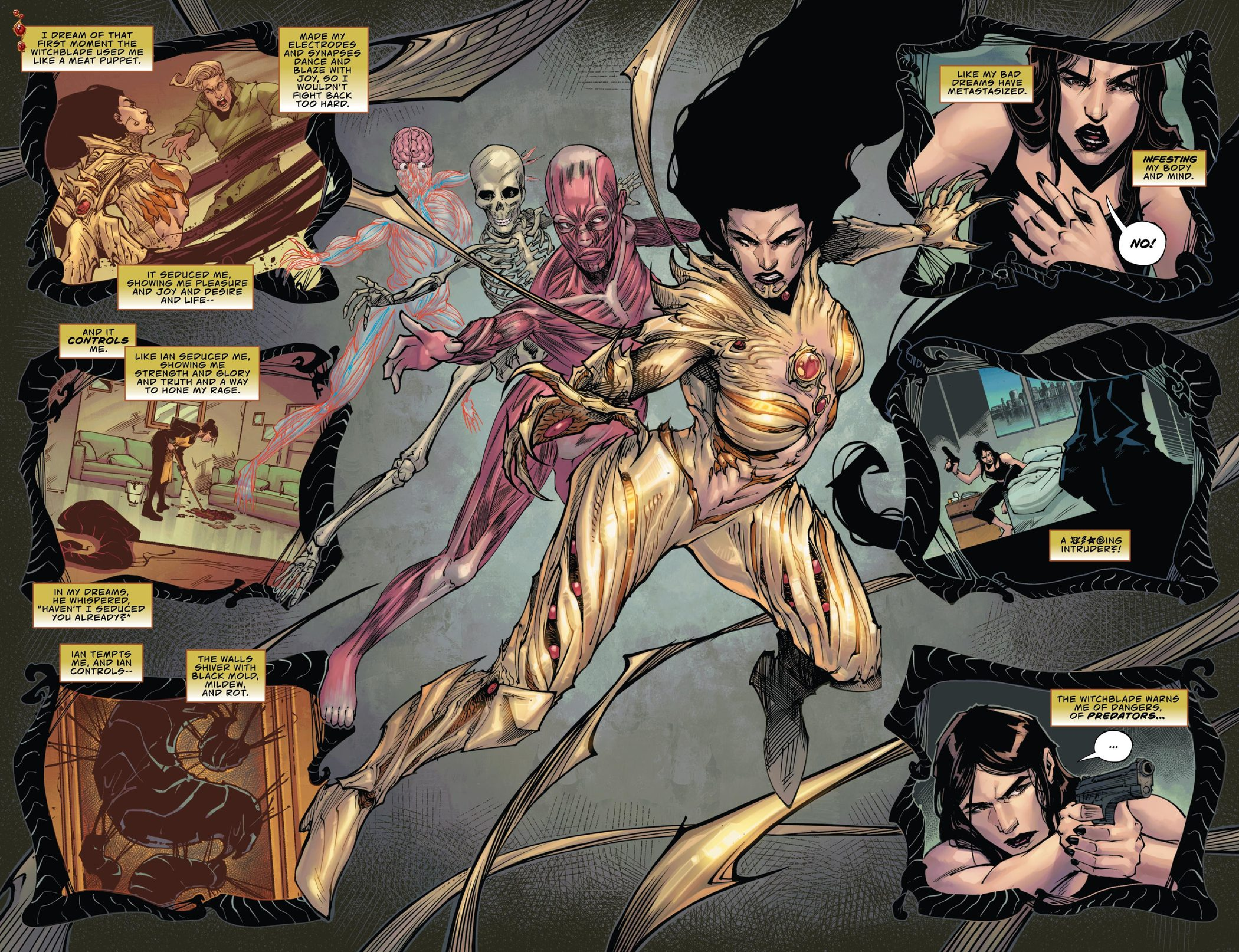
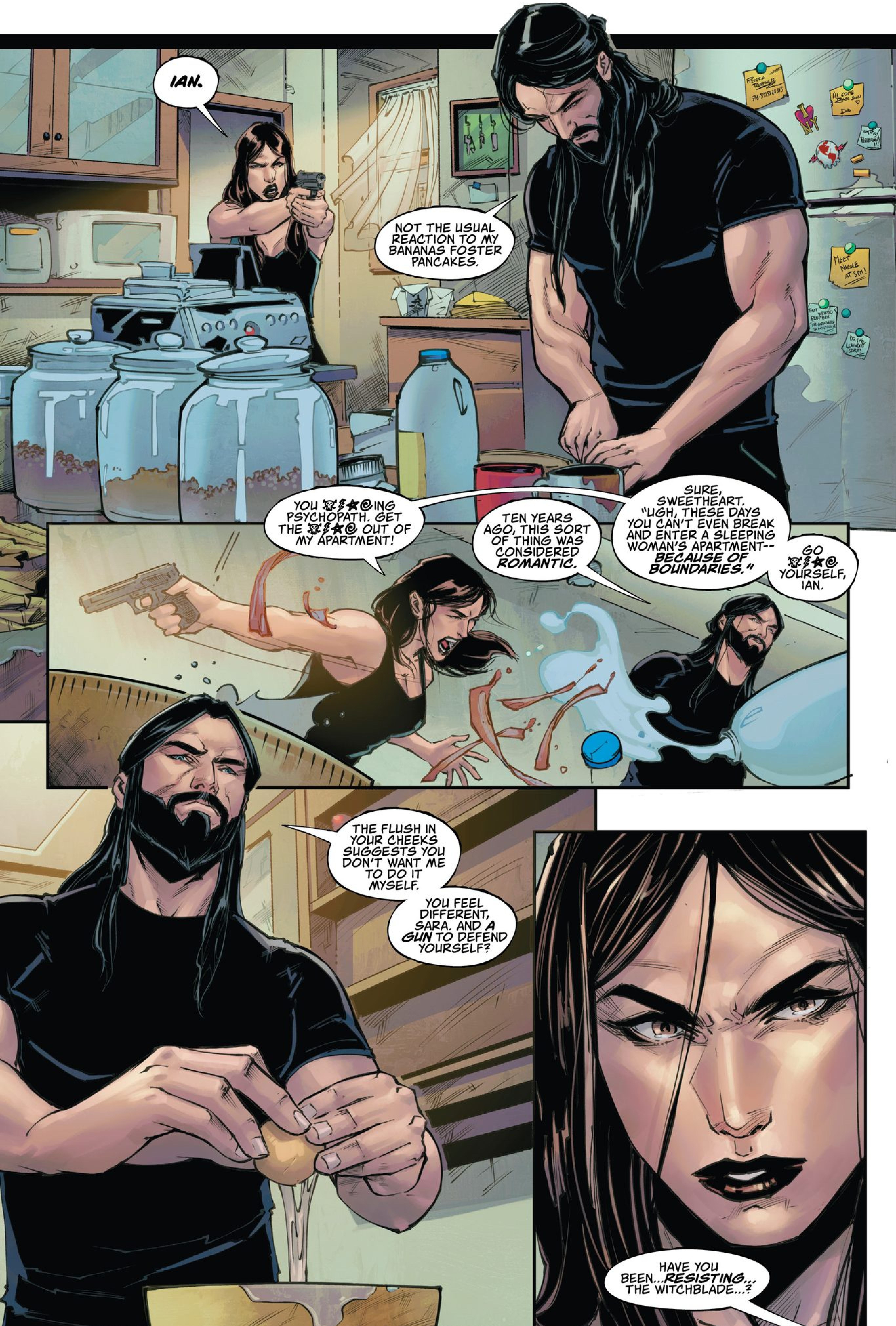
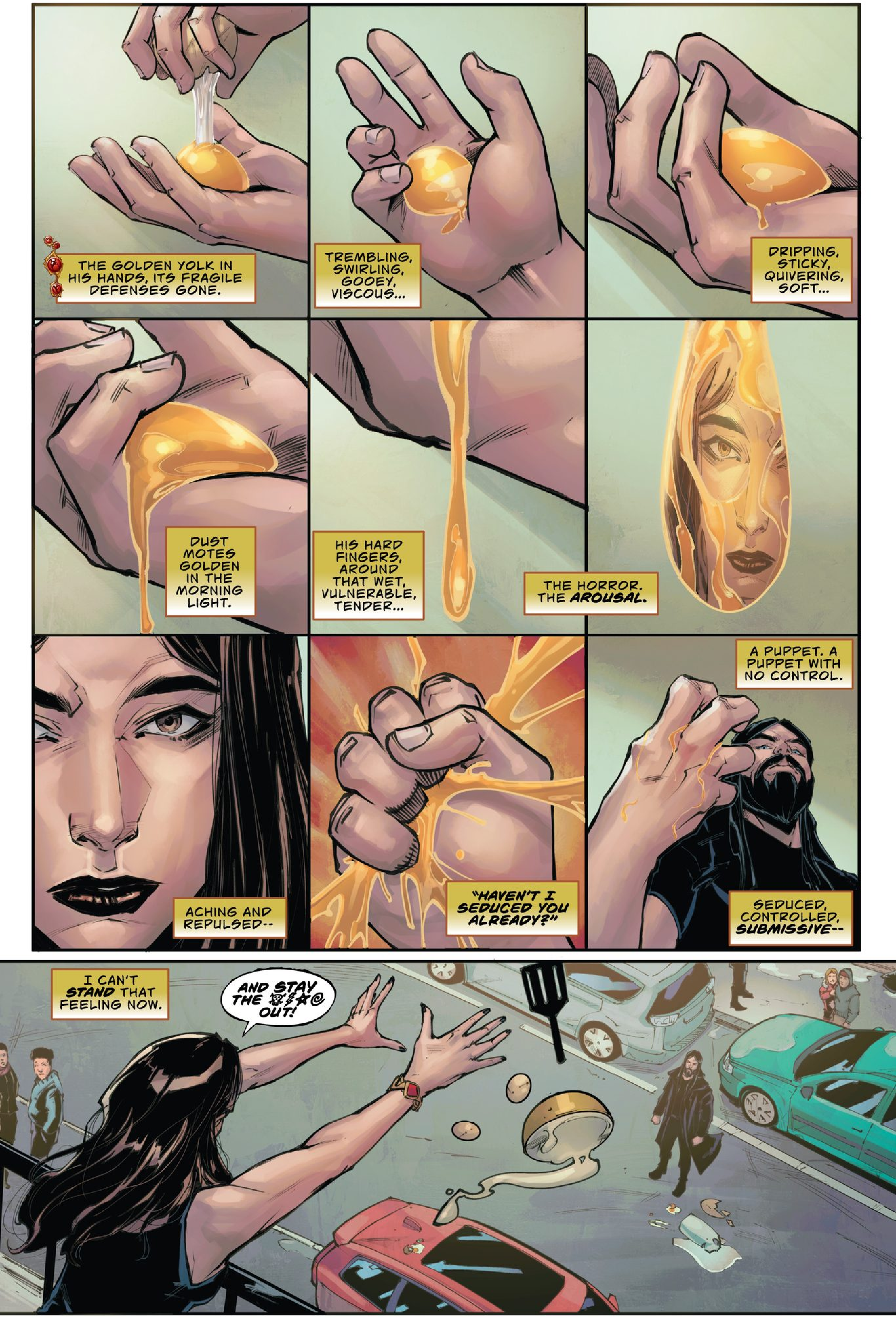
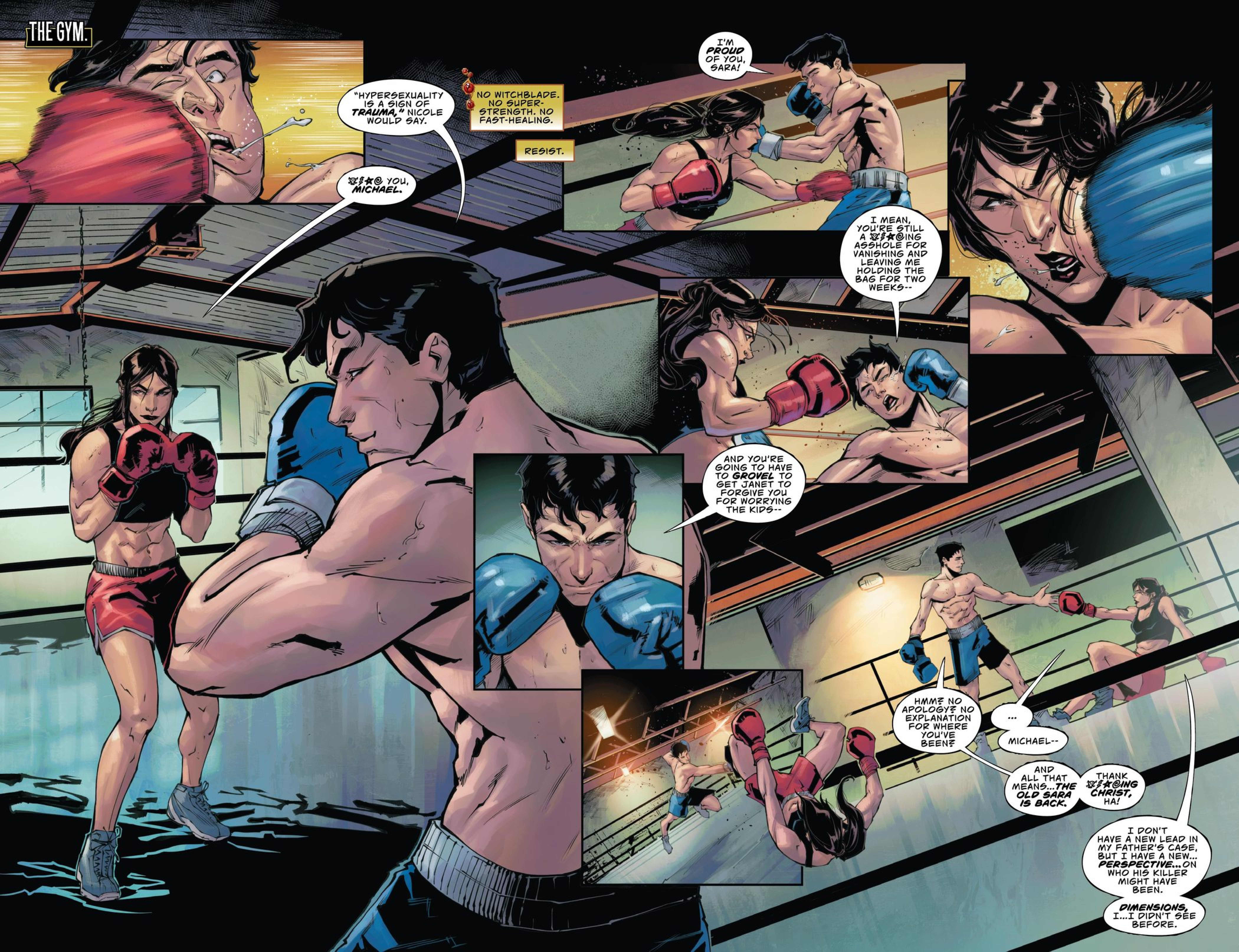
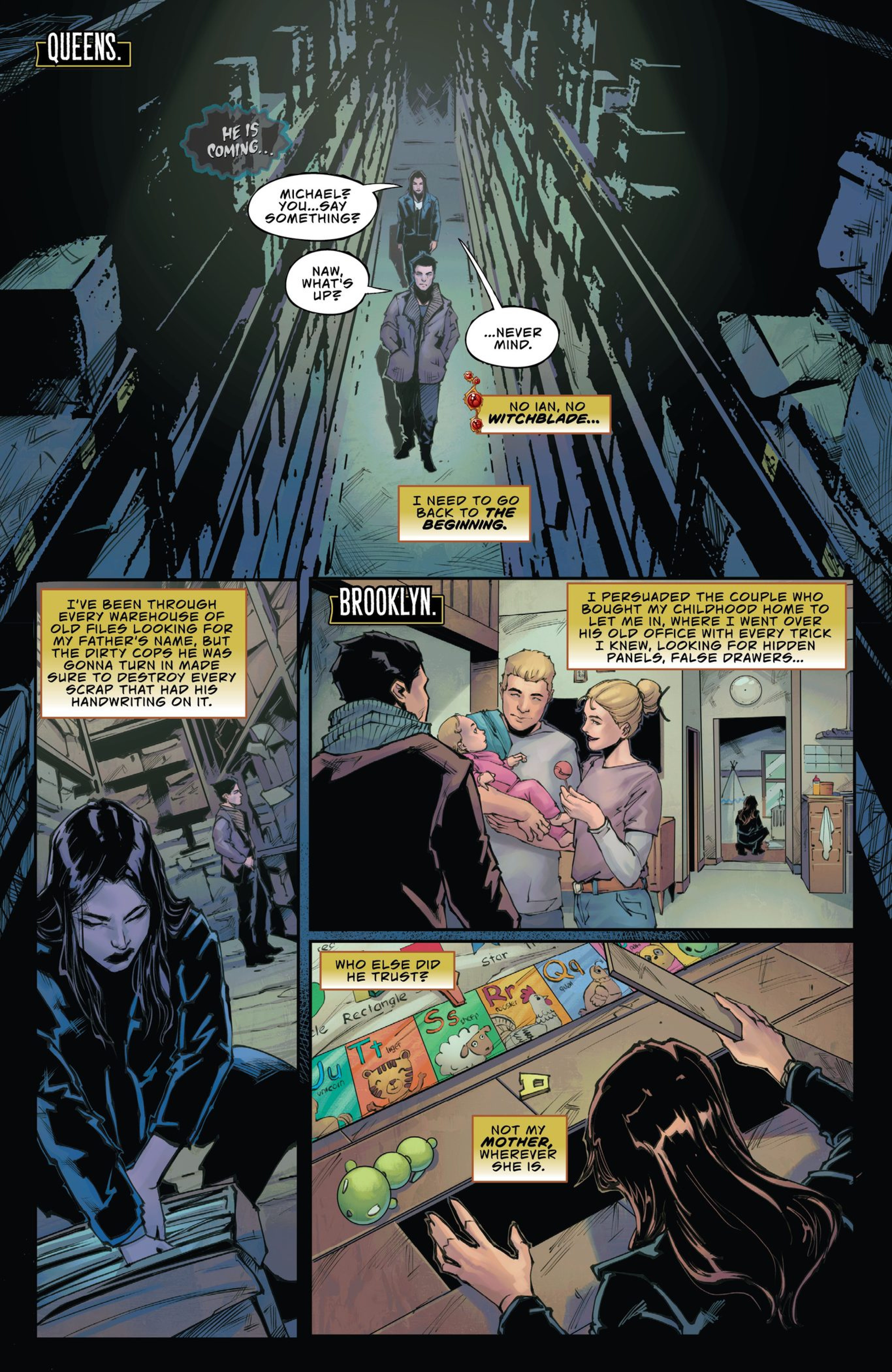

THE APARTMENT OF SARA PEZZINI.
I AM DREAMING OF THE FIRST TIME THE WITCHBLADE TOOK HOLD AGAINST MY WILL.
ITS TENDRILS WRITHING OVER MY BODY, HOT-COLD, METAL MOLTEN, SILKY-ELECTRIC.
AND THEN IT ***SNAPS*** INTO PLACE. HINGES, EDGES, JOINTS AND RIDGES--
AND IT USES ME. IT ***USES*** ME TO FIGHT. IT DETERMINES EVERY MOVE, WHILE I SCREAM AGAINST ITS WILL, NO, NO, NO, ***NO***--
I AM A BODY.
I AM A PRISONER.
I AM A THING.
MY BODY IS NOT MINE.

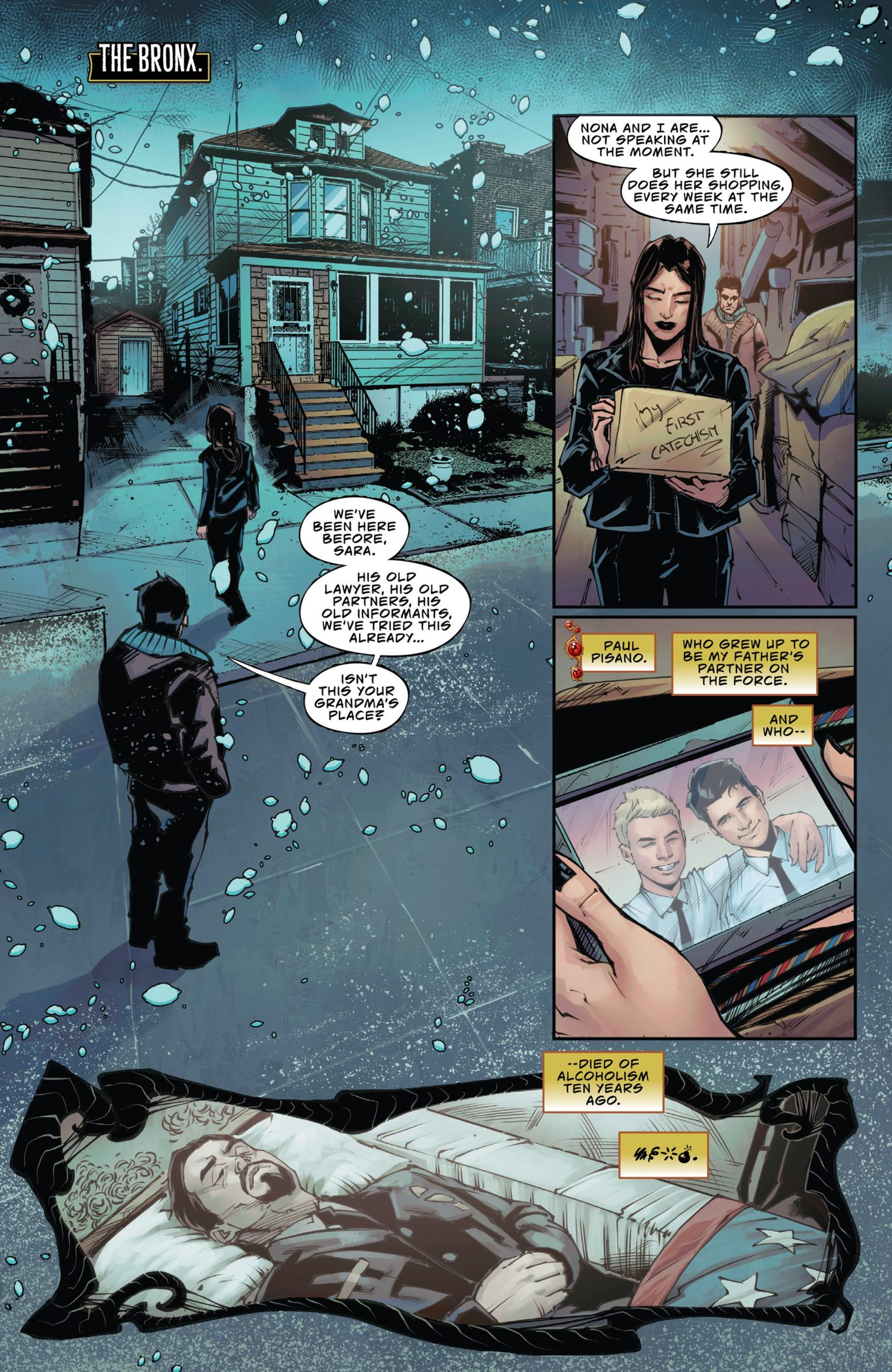

I DREAM OF THAT FIRST MOMENT THE WITCHBLADE USED ME LIKE A MEAT PUPPET.
MADE MY ELECTRODES AND SYNAPSES DANCE AND BLAZE WITH JOY, SO I WOULDN'T FIGHT BACK TOO HARD.
IT SEDUCED ME, SHOWING ME PLEASURE AND JOY AND DESIRE AND LIFE--
AND IT *CONTROLS* ME.
LIKE IAN SEDUCED ME, SHOWING ME STRENGTH AND GLORY AND TRUTH AND A WAY TO HONE MY RAGE.
IN MY DREAMS, HE WHISPERED, "HAVEN'T I SEDUCED YOU ALREADY?"
IAN TEMPTS ME, AND IAN CONTROLS--
THE WALLS SHIVER WITH BLACK MOLD, MILDEW, AND ROT.
LIKE MY BAD DREAMS HAVE METASTASIZED.
INFESTING MY BODY AND MIND.
NO!
A ☠⚡★@ING INTRUDER?!
THE WITCHBLADE WARNS ME OF DANGERS, OF *PREDATORS*...
...

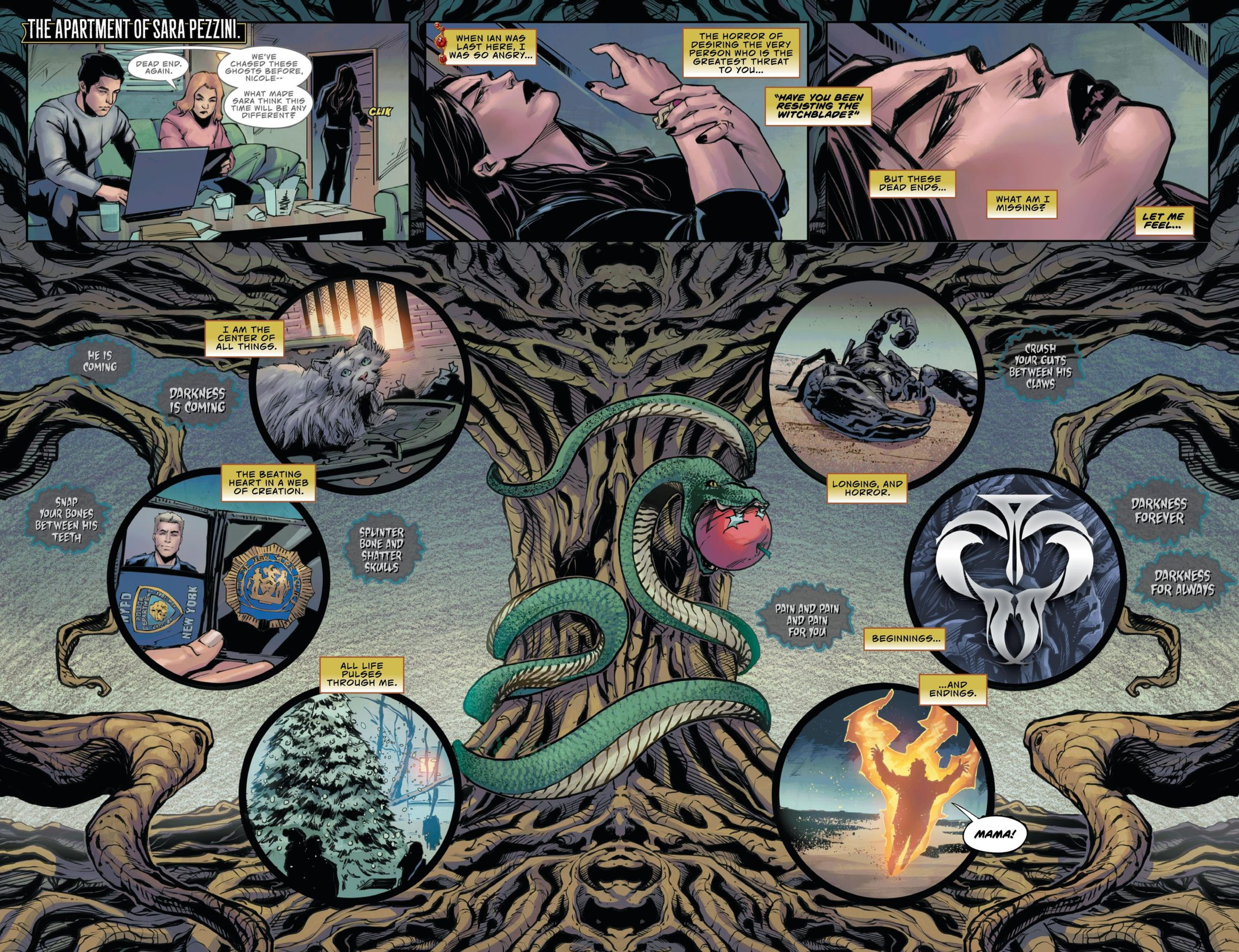

IAN.
NOT THE USUAL REACTION TO MY BANANAS FOSTER PANCAKES.
I'LL COME BACK SOON ♥ DAD
MEET NICOLE AT 5PM!
THAT WEIRDO PLUMBER
DO THE LAUNDRY SARA!
YOU ☠⚡★@ING PSYCHOPATH. GET THE ☠⚡★@ OUT OF MY APARTMENT!
TEN YEARS AGO, THIS SORT OF THING WAS CONSIDERED *ROMANTIC.*
SURE, SWEETHEART. "UGH, THESE DAYS YOU CAN'T EVEN BREAK AND ENTER A SLEEPING WOMAN'S APARTMENT-- *BECAUSE OF BOUNDARIES.*"
GO ☠⚡★@ YOURSELF, IAN.
THE FLUSH IN YOUR CHEEKS SUGGESTS YOU DON'T WANT ME TO DO IT MYSELF.
YOU FEEL DIFFERENT, SARA. AND *A GUN* TO DEFEND YOURSELF?
HAVE YOU BEEN...*RESISTING...* THE WITCHBLADE...?

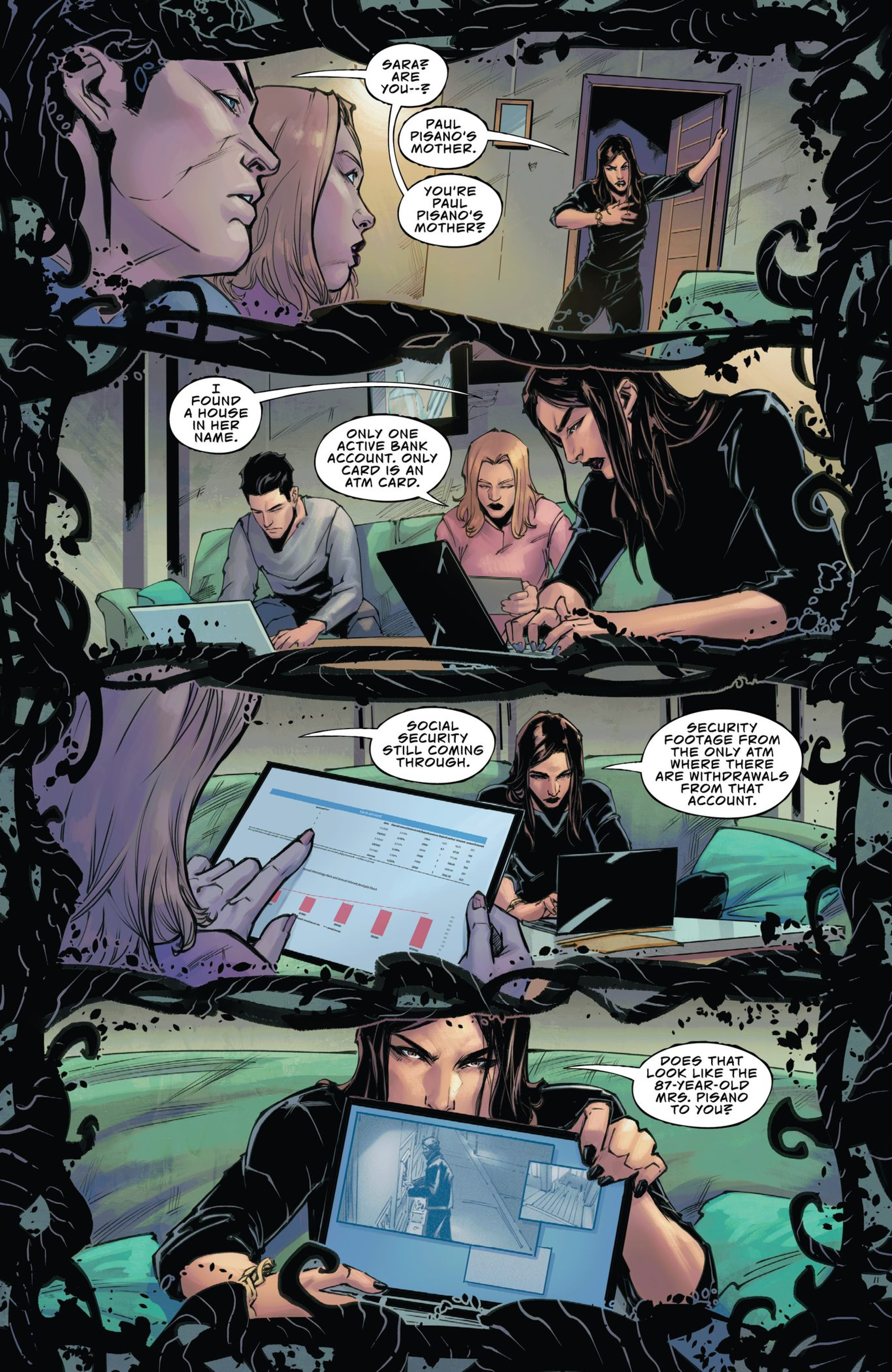

THE GOLDEN YOLK IN HIS HANDS, ITS FRAGILE DEFENSES GONE.
TREMBLING, SWIRLING, GOOEY, VISCOUS...
DRIPPING, STICKY, QUIVERING, SOFT...
DUST MOTES GOLDEN IN THE MORNING LIGHT.
HIS HARD FINGERS, AROUND THAT WET, VULNERABLE, TENDER...
THE HORROR. THE *AROUSAL.*
ACHING AND REPULSED--
"HAVEN'T I SEDUCED YOU ALREADY?"
A PUPPET. A PUPPET WITH NO CONTROL.
SEDUCED, CONTROLLED, ***SUBMISSIVE***--
I CAN'T ***STAND*** THAT FEELING NOW.
*AND **STAY** THE ☠⚡★@ OUT!*

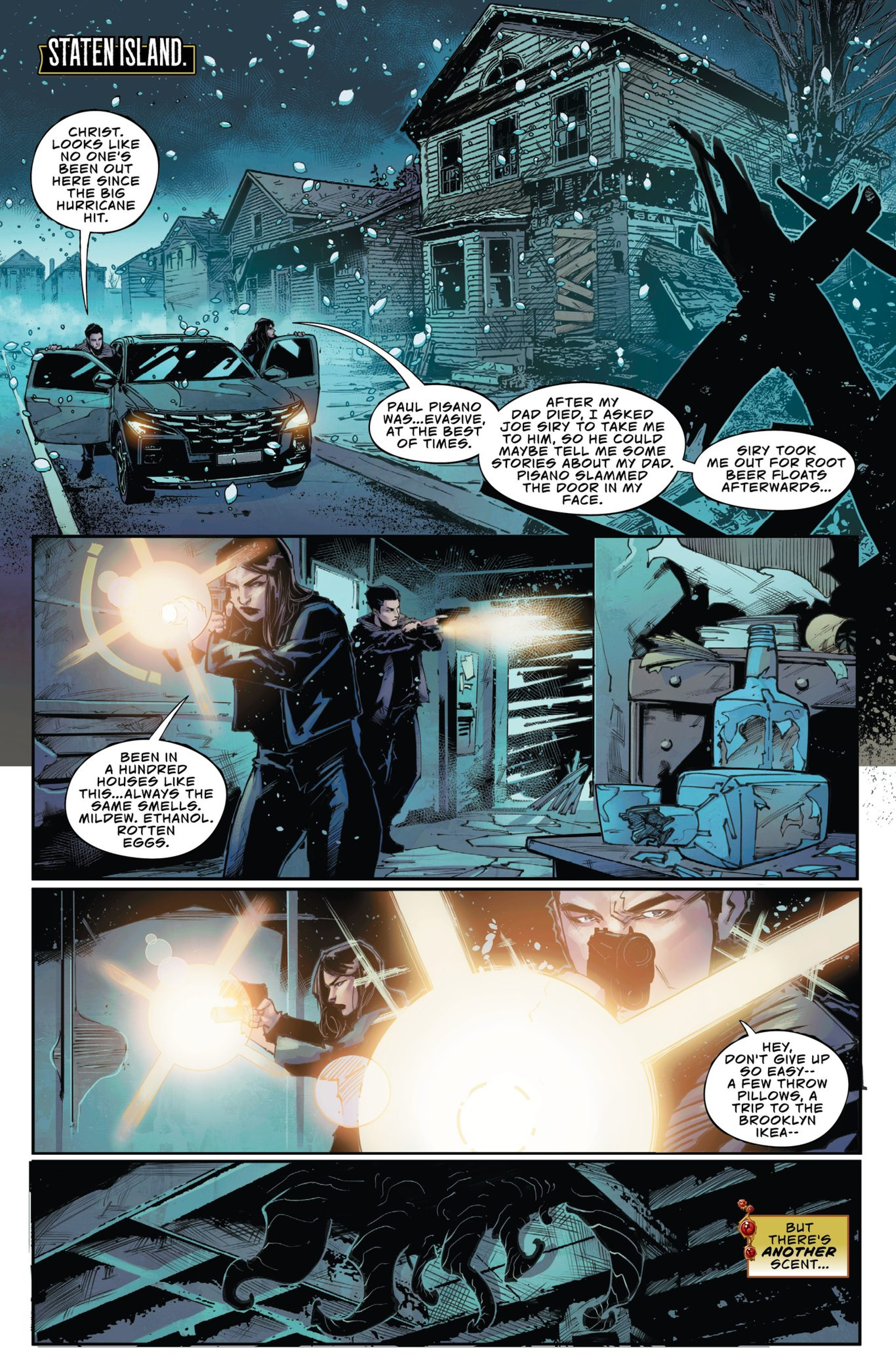

THE GYM.
"HYPERSEXUALITY IS A SIGN OF *TRAUMA*," NICOLE WOULD SAY.
NO WITCHBLADE. NO SUPER-STRENGTH. NO FAST-HEALING.
RESIST.
#$★@ YOU, ***MICHAEL.***
I'M ***PROUD*** OF YOU, SARA!
I MEAN, YOU'RE STILL A #$★@ING ASSHOLE FOR VANISHING AND LEAVING ME HOLDING THE BAG FOR TWO WEEKS--
AND YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO ***GROVEL*** TO GET JANET TO FORGIVE YOU FOR WORRYING THE KIDS--
HMM? NO APOLOGY? NO EXPLANATION FOR WHERE YOU'VE BEEN?
...
MICHAEL--
AND ALL THAT MEANS... ***THE OLD SARA IS BACK.***
THANK #$★@ING ***CHRIST,*** HA!
I DON'T HAVE A NEW LEAD IN MY FATHER'S CASE, BUT I HAVE A NEW... ***PERSPECTIVE...*** ON WHO HIS KILLER MIGHT HAVE BEEN.
DIMENSIONS, I... I DIDN'T SEE BEFORE.

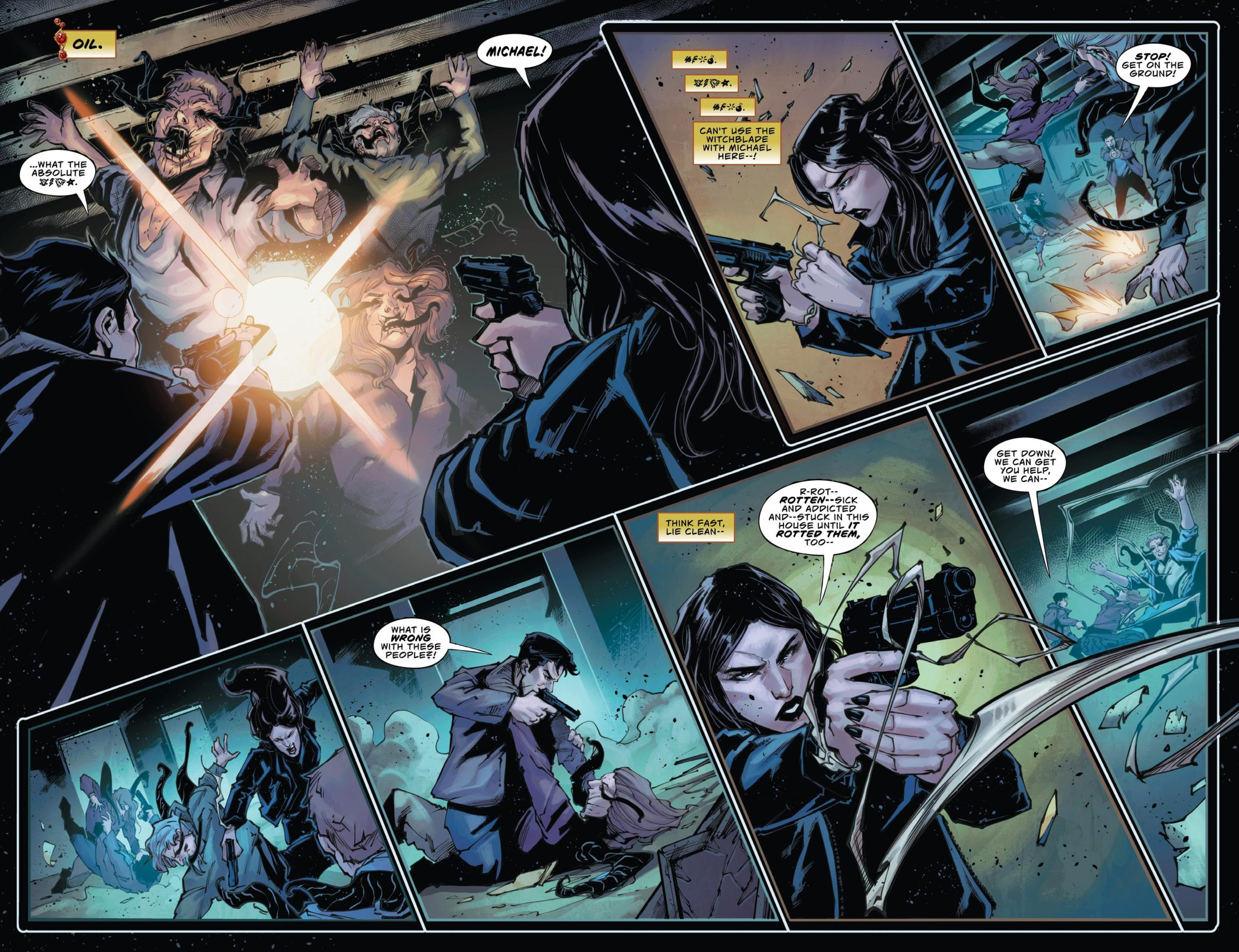

QUEENS.
HE IS COMING...
MICHAEL? YOU...SAY SOMETHING?
NAW, WHAT'S UP?
...NEVER MIND.
NO IAN, NO *WITCHBLADE...*
I NEED TO GO BACK TO *THE BEGINNING.*
I'VE BEEN THROUGH EVERY WAREHOUSE OF OLD FILES LOOKING FOR MY FATHER'S NAME, BUT THE DIRTY COPS HE WAS GONNA TURN IN MADE SURE TO DESTROY EVERY SCRAP THAT HAD HIS HANDWRITING ON IT.
BROOKLYN.
I PERSUADED THE COUPLE WHO BOUGHT MY CHILDHOOD HOME TO LET ME IN, WHERE I WENT OVER HIS OLD OFFICE WITH EVERY TRICK I KNEW, LOOKING FOR HIDDEN PANELS, FALSE DRAWERS...
WHO ELSE DID HE TRUST?
Star
Rectangle
Rr rooster
Qq quail
Ss sheep
Tt tiger
Uu unicorn
NOT MY *MOTHER,* WHEREVER SHE IS.

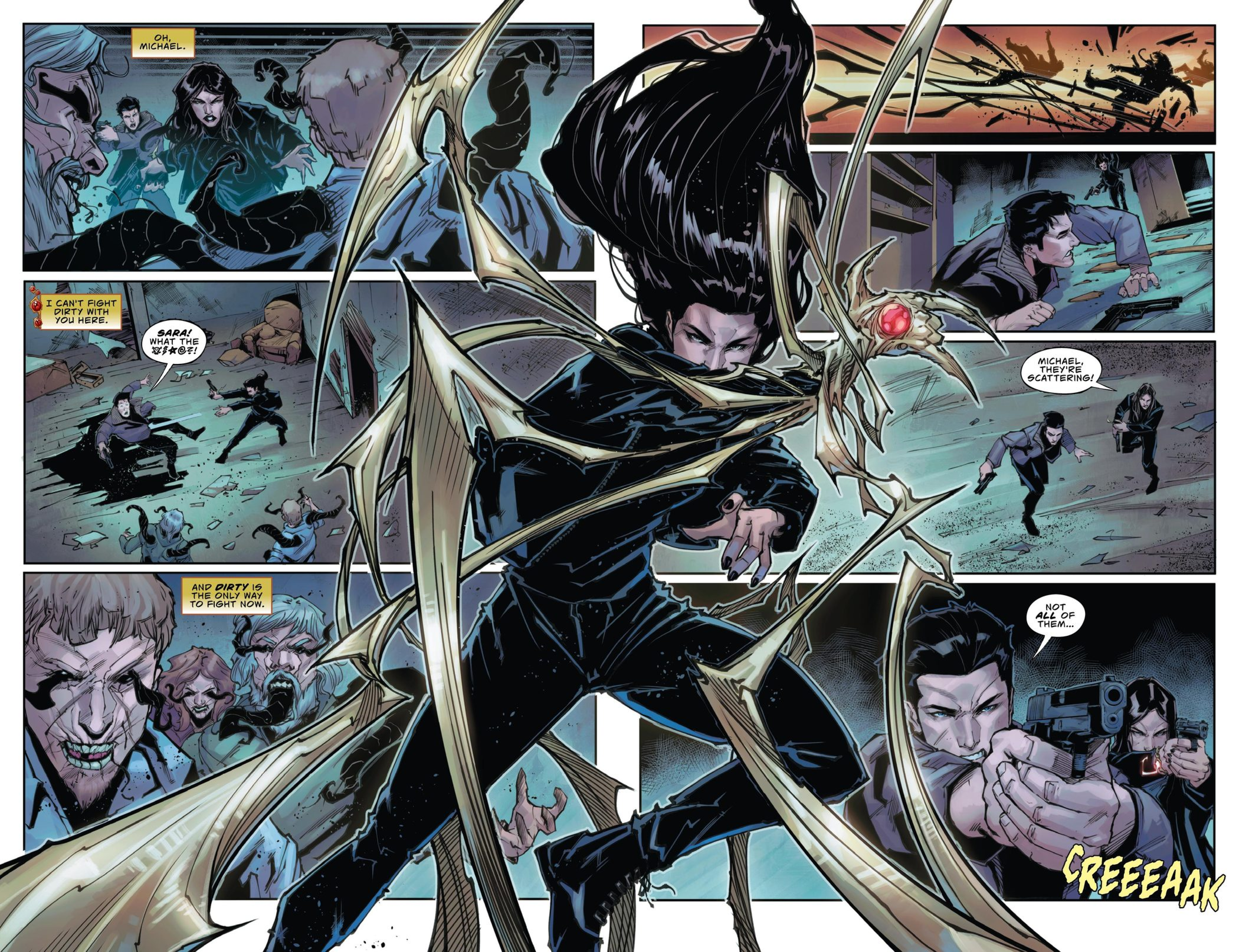

THE BRONX.
WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE, SARA.
HIS OLD LAWYER, HIS OLD PARTNERS, HIS OLD INFORMANTS, WE'VE TRIED THIS ALREADY...
ISN'T THIS YOUR GRANDMA'S PLACE?
NONA AND I ARE... NOT SPEAKING AT THE MOMENT.
BUT SHE STILL DOES HER SHOPPING, EVERY WEEK AT THE SAME TIME.
MY FIRST CATECHISM
PAUL PISANO.
WHO GREW UP TO BE MY FATHER'S PARTNER ON THE FORCE.
AND WHO--
--DIED OF ALCOHOLISM TEN YEARS AGO.
#$✱💣.

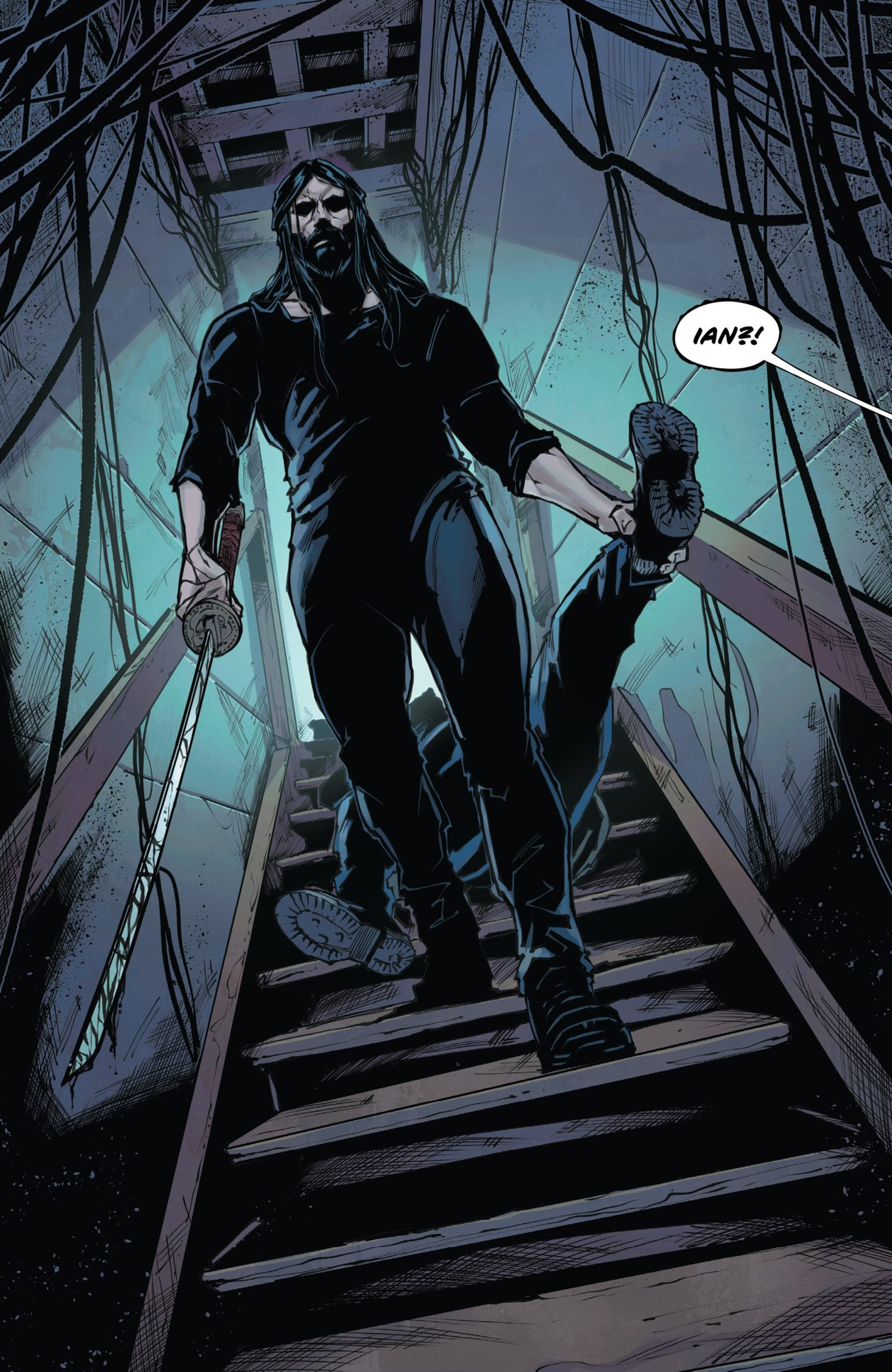

THE APARTMENT OF SARA PEZZINI.
DEAD END. AGAIN.
WE'VE CHASED THESE GHOSTS BEFORE, NICOLE--
WHAT MADE SARA THINK THIS TIME WILL BE ANY DIFFERENT?
CLIK
WHEN IAN WAS LAST HERE, I WAS SO ANGRY...
THE HORROR OF DESIRING THE VERY PERSON WHO IS THE GREATEST THREAT TO YOU...
"HAVE YOU BEEN RESISTING THE WITCHBLADE?"
BUT THESE DEAD ENDS...
WHAT AM I MISSING?
LET ME FEEL...
HE IS COMING
DARKNESS IS COMING
I AM THE CENTER OF ALL THINGS.
THE BEATING HEART IN A WEB OF CREATION.
SNAP YOUR BONES BETWEEN HIS TEETH
SPLINTER BONE AND SHATTER SKULLS
ALL LIFE PULSES THROUGH ME.
CRUSH YOUR GUTS BETWEEN HIS CLAWS
LONGING, AND HORROR.
DARKNESS FOREVER
DARKNESS FOR ALWAYS
PAIN AND PAIN AND PAIN FOR YOU
BEGINNINGS...
...AND ENDINGS.
MAMA!

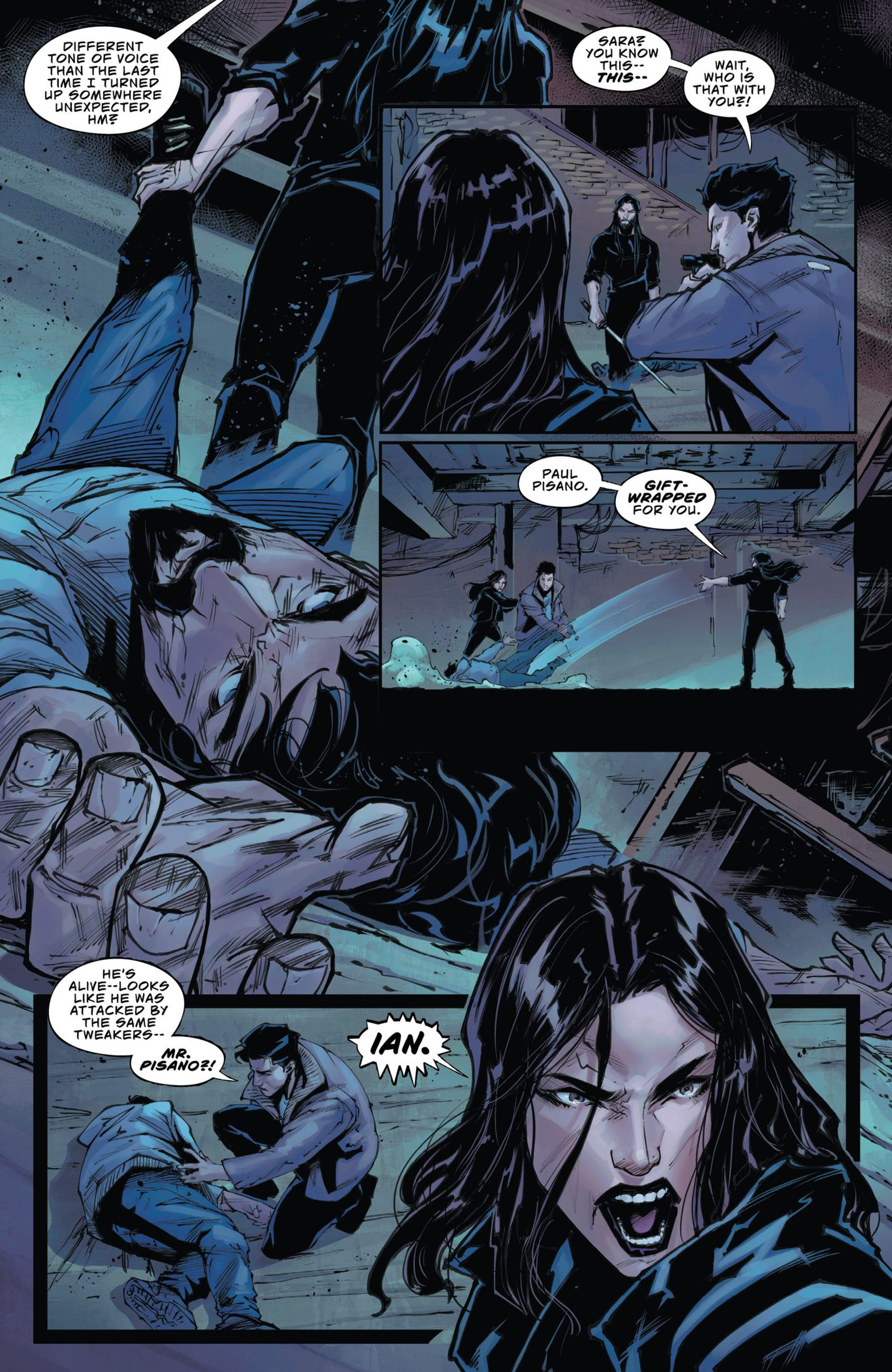

SARA? ARE YOU--?
PAUL PISANO'S MOTHER.
YOU'RE PAUL PISANO'S MOTHER?
I FOUND A HOUSE IN HER NAME.
ONLY ONE ACTIVE BANK ACCOUNT. ONLY CARD IS AN ATM CARD.
SOCIAL SECURITY STILL COMING THROUGH.
SECURITY FOOTAGE FROM THE ONLY ATM WHERE THERE ARE WITHDRAWALS FROM THAT ACCOUNT.
DOES THAT LOOK LIKE THE 87-YEAR-OLD MRS. PISANO TO YOU?

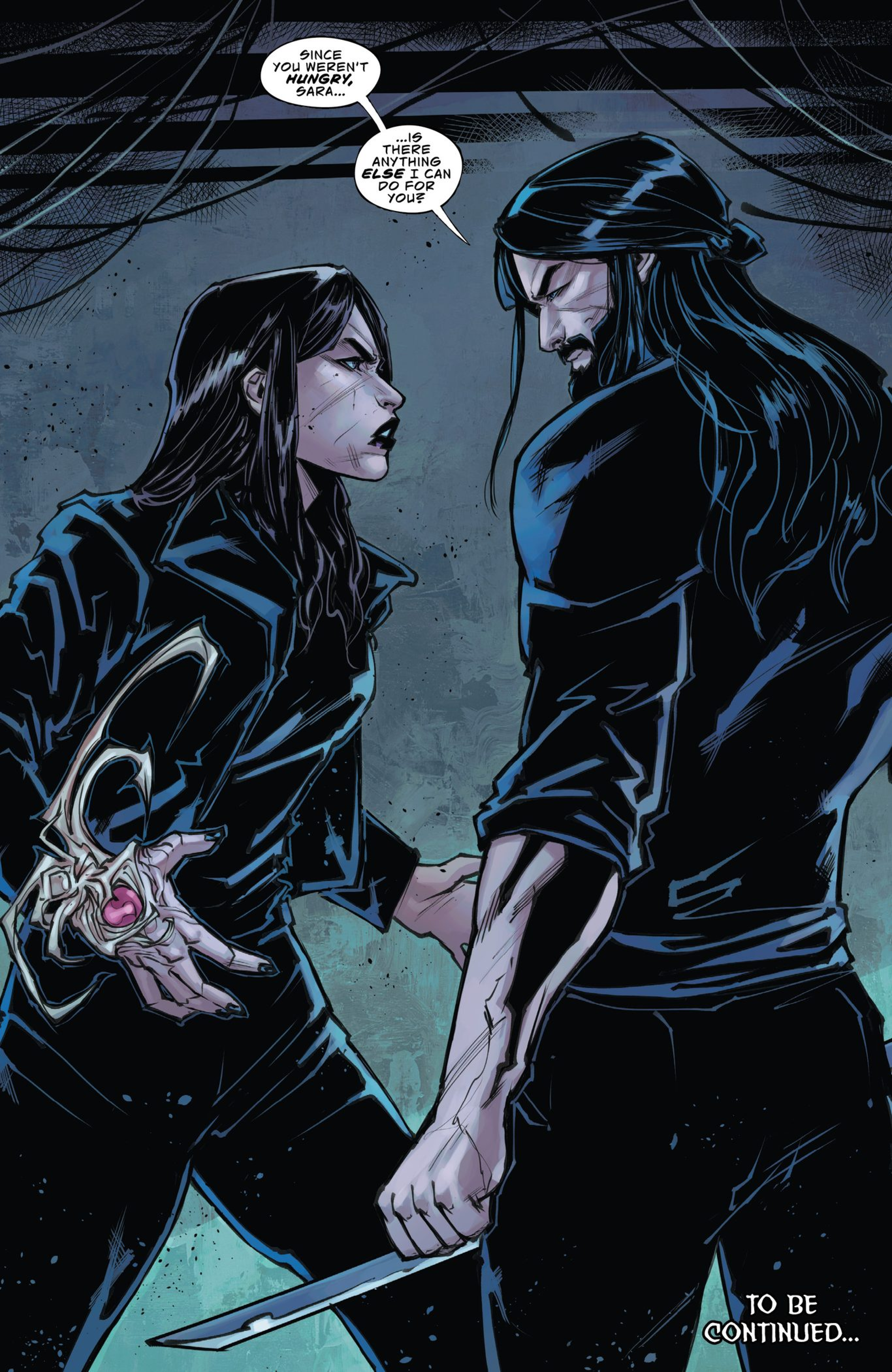

STATEN ISLAND.
CHRIST. LOOKS LIKE NO ONE'S BEEN OUT HERE SINCE THE BIG HURRICANE HIT.
PAUL PISANO WAS...EVASIVE, AT THE BEST OF TIMES.
AFTER MY DAD DIED, I ASKED JOE SIRY TO TAKE ME TO HIM, SO HE COULD MAYBE TELL ME SOME STORIES ABOUT MY DAD. PISANO SLAMMED THE DOOR IN MY FACE.
SIRY TOOK ME OUT FOR ROOT BEER FLOATS AFTERWARDS...
BEEN IN A HUNDRED HOUSES LIKE THIS...ALWAYS THE SAME SMELLS. MILDEW. ETHANOL. ROTTEN EGGS.
HEY, DON'T GIVE UP SO EASY-- A FEW THROW PILLOWS, A TRIP TO THE BROOKLYN IKEA--
BUT THERE'S *ANOTHER* SCENT...


OIL.
...WHAT THE ABSOLUTE ☠⚡✹★.
MICHAEL!
#⚡✱💣.
☠⚡✹★.
#⚡✱💣.
CAN'T USE THE WITCHBLADE WITH MICHAEL HERE--!
STOP! GET ON THE GROUND!
GET DOWN! WE CAN GET YOU HELP, WE CAN--
THINK FAST, LIE CLEAN--
R-ROT-- ROTTEN--SICK AND ADDICTED AND--STUCK IN THIS HOUSE UNTIL IT ROTTED THEM, TOO--
WHAT IS WRONG WITH THESE PEOPLE?!


OH, MICHAEL.
I CAN'T FIGHT DIRTY WITH YOU HERE.
SARA! WHAT THE ☠$★@?!
AND DIRTY IS THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT NOW.
MICHAEL, THEY'RE SCATTERING!
NOT ALL OF THEM...
CREEEAAK


IAN?!


DIFFERENT TONE OF VOICE THAN THE LAST TIME I TURNED UP SOMEWHERE UNEXPECTED, HM?
SARA? YOU KNOW THIS-- *THIS*--
WAIT, WHO IS THAT WITH YOU?!
PAUL PISANO.
GIFT-WRAPPED FOR YOU.
HE'S ALIVE--LOOKS LIKE HE WAS ATTACKED BY THE SAME TWEAKERS--
MR. PISANO?!
IAN.


SINCE YOU WEREN'T ***HUNGRY,*** SARA...
...IS THERE ANYTHING ***ELSE*** I CAN DO FOR YOU?
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE!

"DON'T SMOKE IN BED"

In Memoriam

Elena Salcedo

January 19th, 1975 - August 22nd, 2024

“I love people who make me laugh. I honestly think it’s the thing I like most, to laugh. It cures a multitude of ills. It’s probably the most important thing in a person.”
– Audrey Hepburn

A FEW WORDS ABOUT ELENA...

Over the course of the next few months, we'd like to create a space to share stories of the ways Elena touched the lives of so many with a few first-hand accounts...

A passionate, hard-working, ride-or-die badass, she was also earnest, loyal, and one of the funniest people around. She'd kick your butt if you deserved it, but she'd pull it out of the fire for you, too. Walking a convention with her was like walking with a celebrity: she knew everybody, and everybody was thrilled to see her. We met on my very first day of working in comics. After over a decade of all-nighters and Kickstarters and convention after convention, I can't imagine this industry - let alone my life - without you, Elena. Thank you for everything.

– Ryan Cady

•••••

Elena Salcedo loved comics and the people that made them. She advocated for people of color and underrepresented creatives in the industry. I was lucky to shadow and learn from Elena at Top Cow. She was the toughest, kindest, fiercest, and most loyal person I've ever worked alongside with. I don't know anyone who ate and breathed the business like she did. Her impact and dedication to the business will be felt and remembered for a long time. To say that I will miss her is an understatement. The fact that you are reading this Witchblade comic is due to Elena's unwavering devotion to comics—which is what legends are made of.

– Henry Barajas

•••••

It's an honor for me to write a tribute to Elena. I am at a loss about what to say. I worked with her for the last seven years professionally. We had a great working relationship. She was so dedicated to making Top Cow titles top-notch. She had every detail planned out and worked with me and the Image staff to make sure everything was perfect. After many years of strictly business, I am grateful and also deeply saddened that it's only been in the last year that I got to know her on a more personal level. The dynamics of working with people who live in different states doesn't leave much opportunity for personal relationships with coworkers, especially if it's not part of your job to attend cons and work with people in person. It takes effort to get to know each other, and Elena was the type of person who made that effort. I am thankful for that and glad we got to be friends. I will miss her every day.

– Heather Doornink

•••••

Elena wasn't from L.A. originally but to me, she felt as much a part of the L.A. comics scene as Golden Apple or House of Secrets or... well, Top Cow. Institutions that you just assume will always be there. She lit up any room she was in-- she was a perfect mix of optimistic and cynical at the same time. She went out of her way to help me out a bunch of times and never asked for anything in return. We always just assumed I'd get her back somewhere down the line and now...

Rest in Peace, Elena. L.A. won't be the same-- COMICS won't be the same without you.

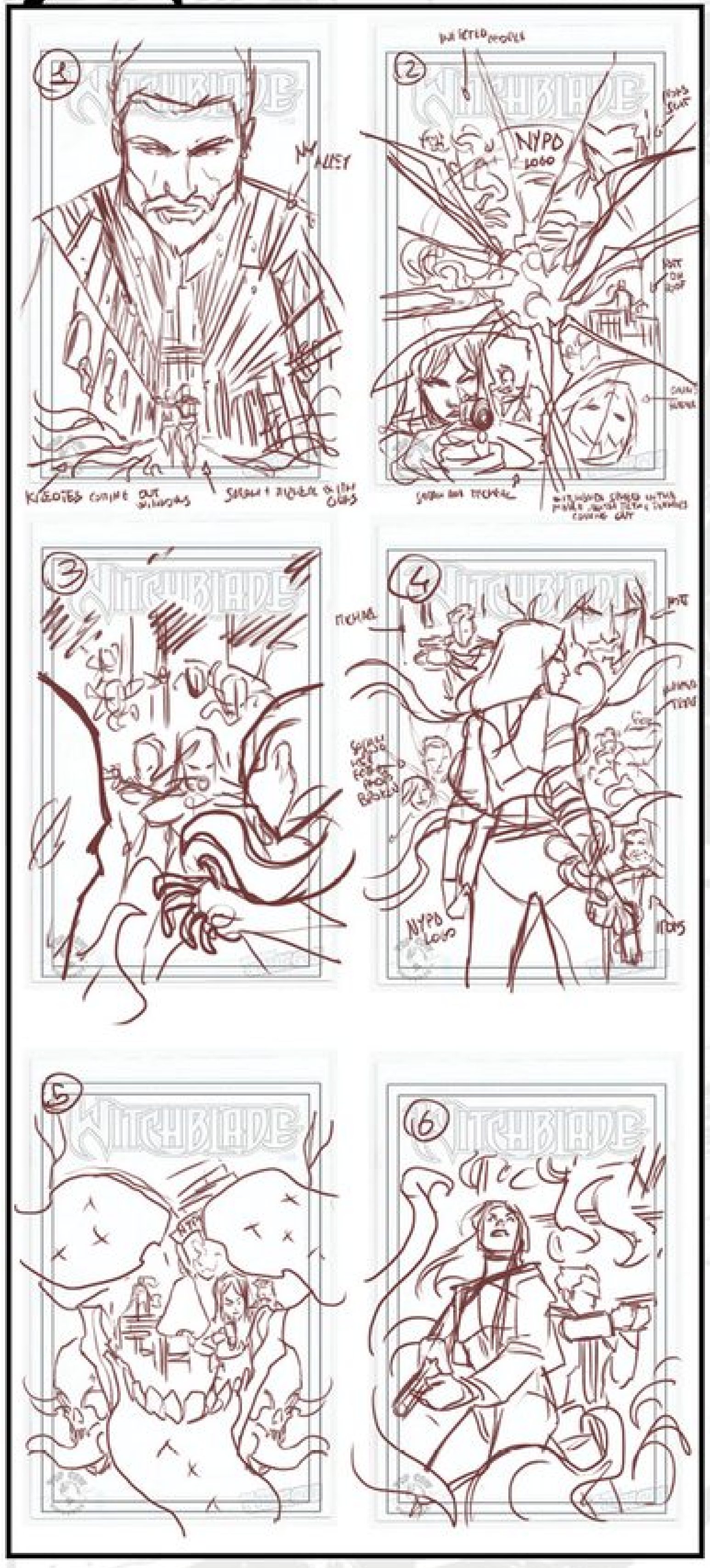
– Tony Fleecs

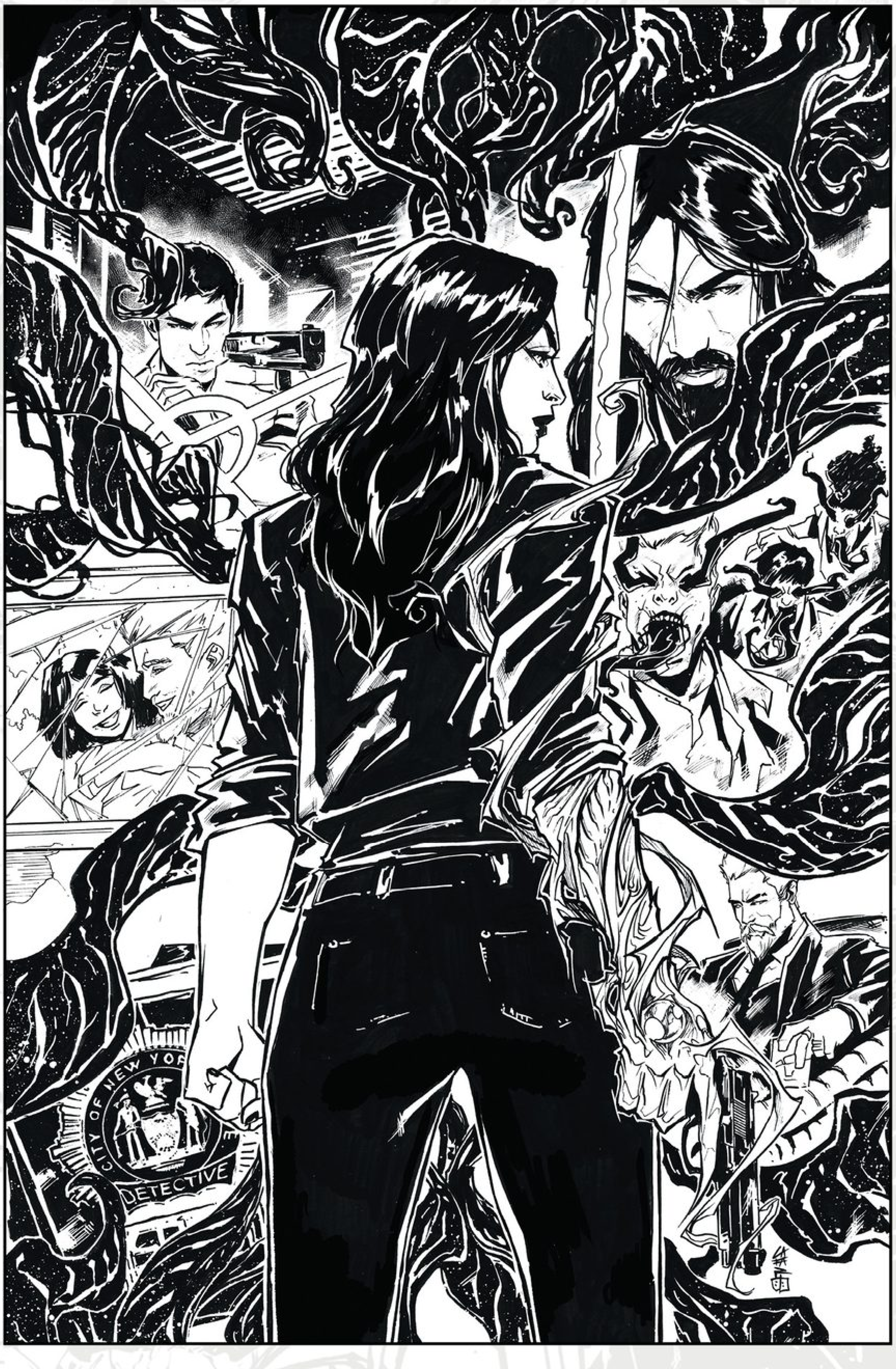
•••••

Loyal. Dedicated. True to herself. These are all ways I would describe Elena to anyone who didn't know her. But, to know her was much more than that. Elena was the type of person that resonated with you in ways that were genuine and human. She didn't hold anything back. She wasn't afraid to voice her opinion—even if it was critical. She was 100% real. And that's a rare thing these days. I'm honored to have known her and call her a friend, and blessed to have the time together we shared at cons and events. We were so much alike in our roles in the comic book industry and I know for a fact it lost a shining light that will never be replaced. She WAS comics. She was also so much more—a friend, an ally, a person you could count on. I will miss her dearly, and I know I'm not alone. Not by a long shot.

– Vince Hernandez

WITCHBLADE #5 Gallery • Cover A Process

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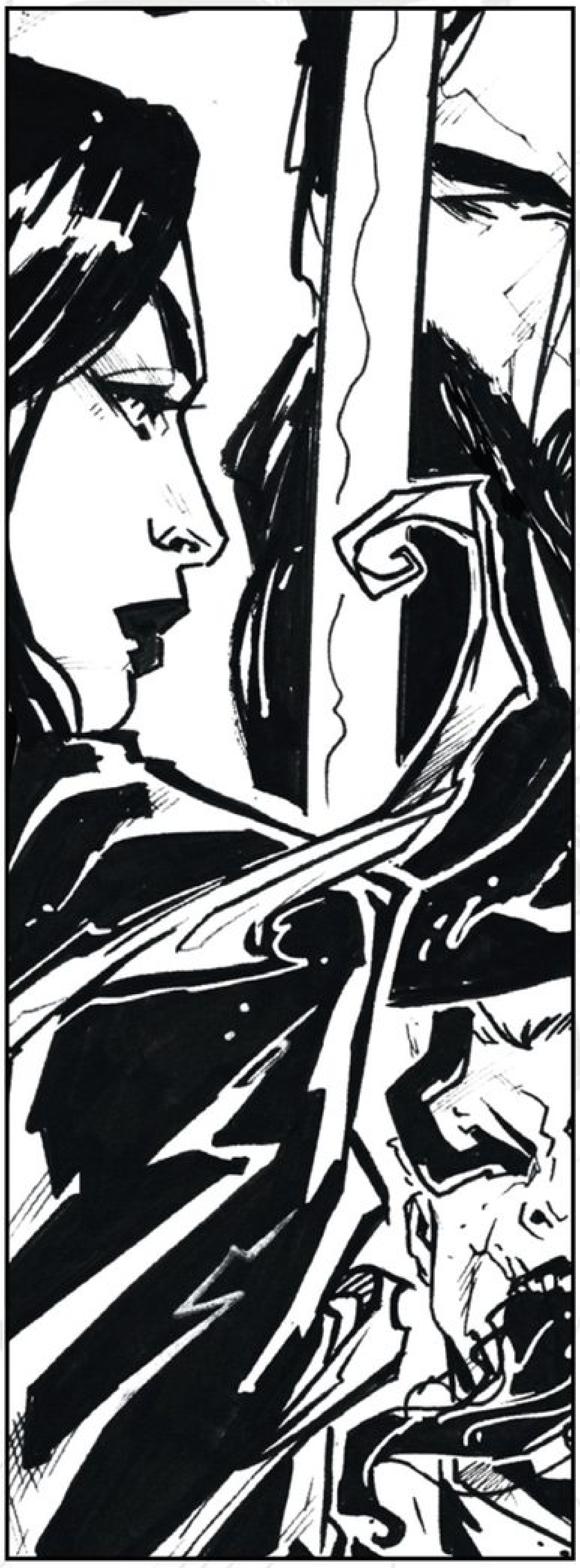
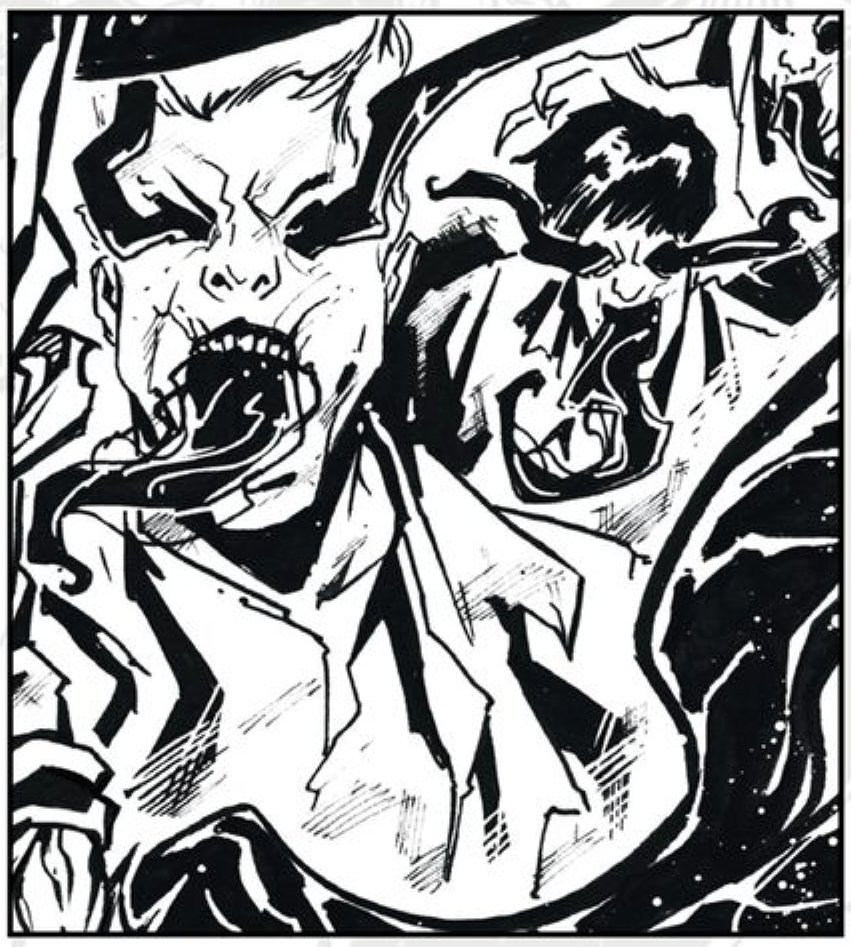
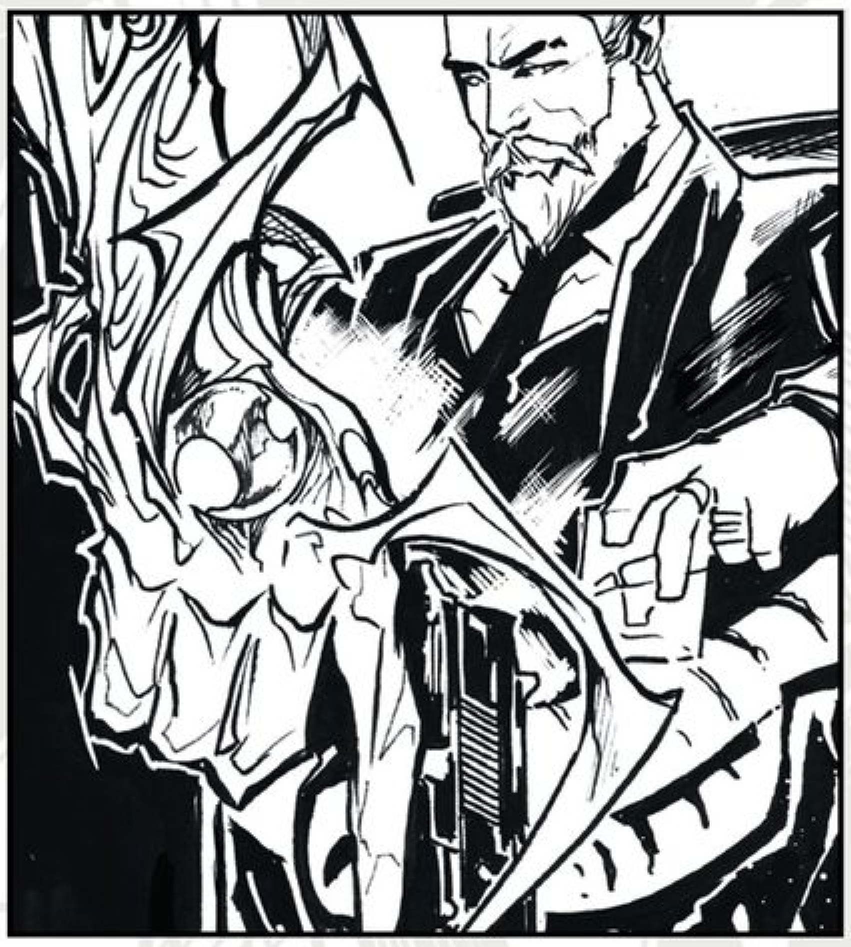
Witchblade #5, Cover A, process from thumbnails, line art to colors
Art by **Giuseppe Cafaro** and **Arif Prianto**







Witchblade #5, Cover A, detail shots

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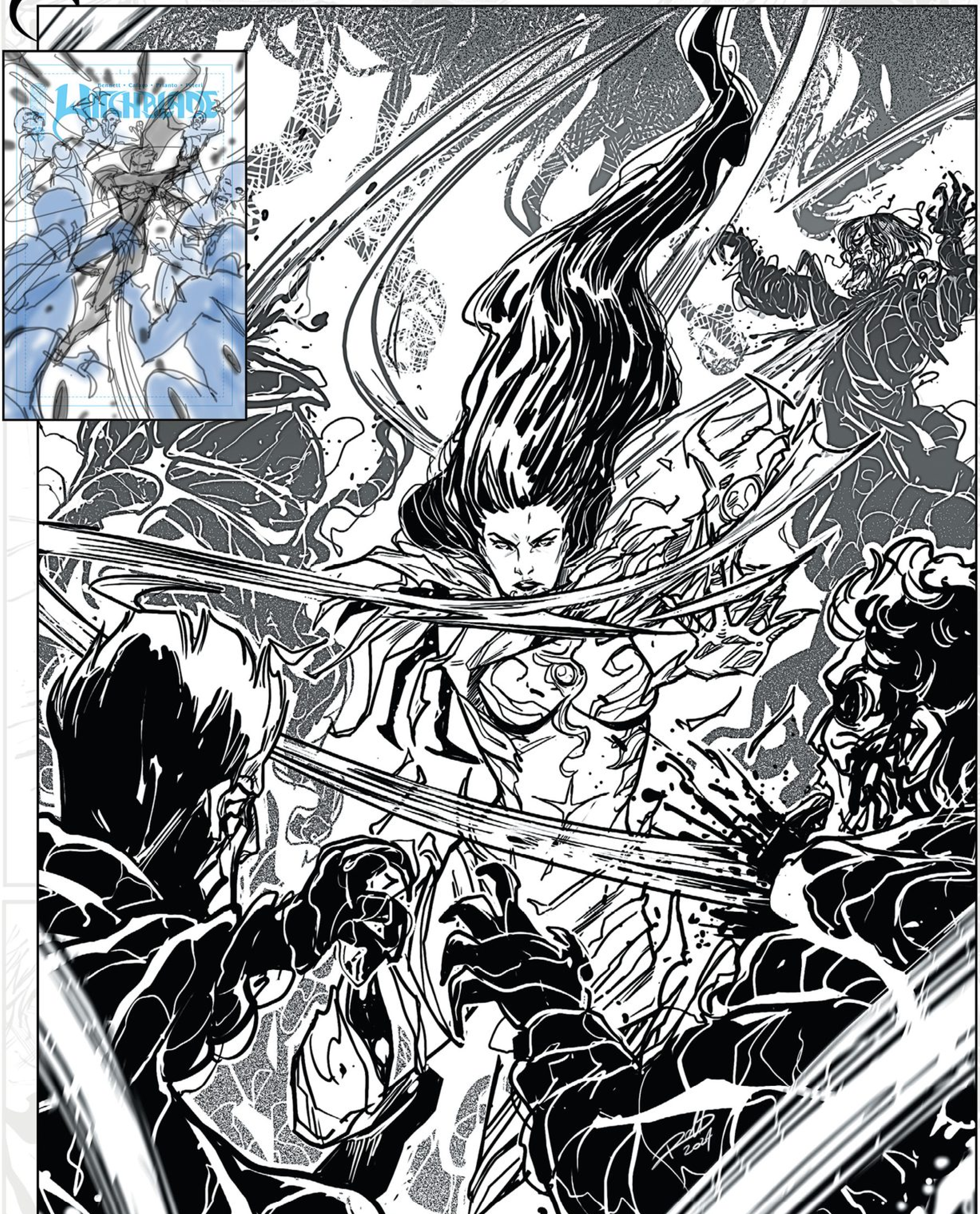
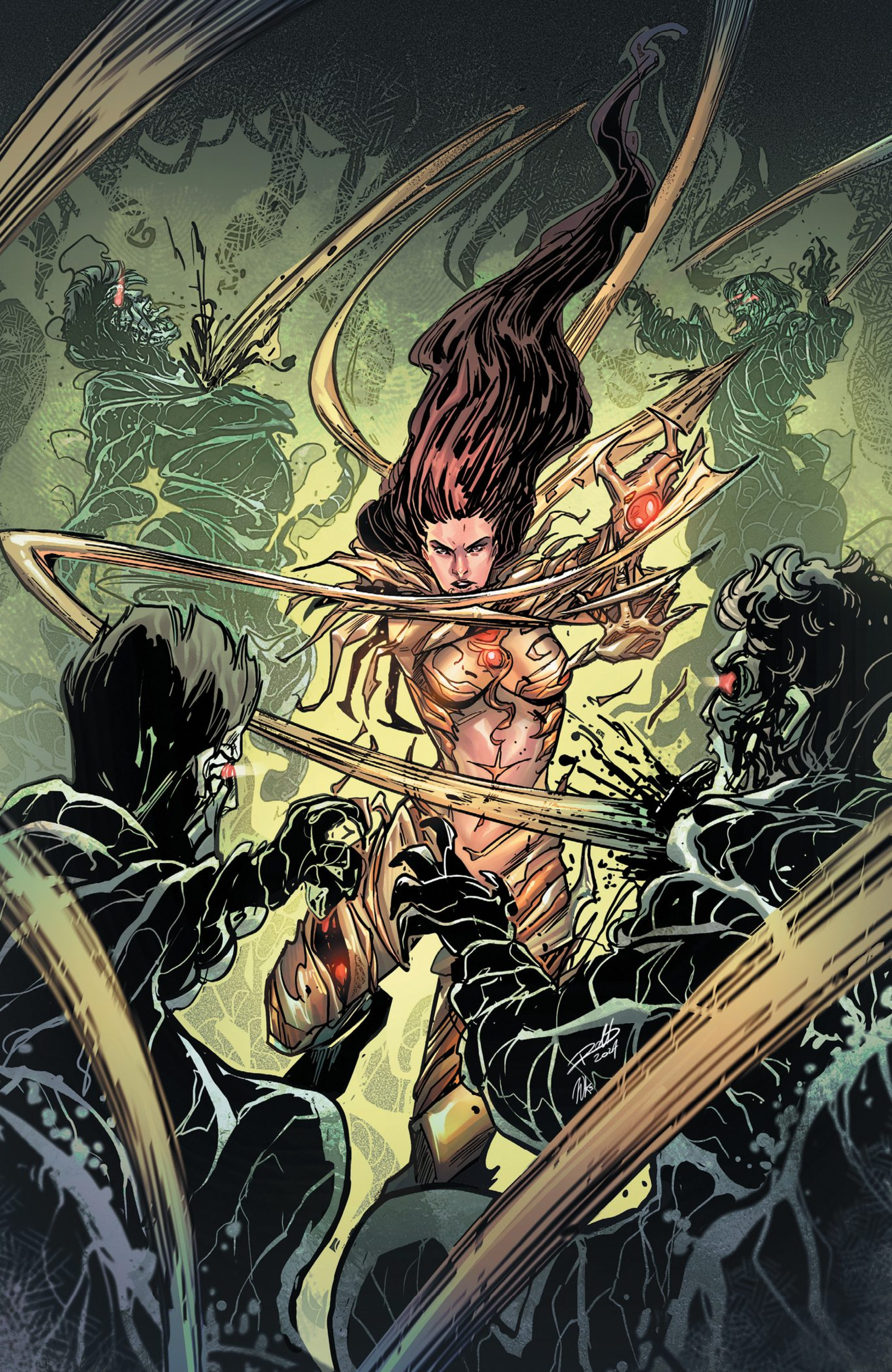
WITCHBLADE #5 Gallery • Cover B Process



Witchblade #5, Cover B, process from thumbnail, line art to colors
Art by **Roberta Ingranata** and **Warnia Sahadewa**



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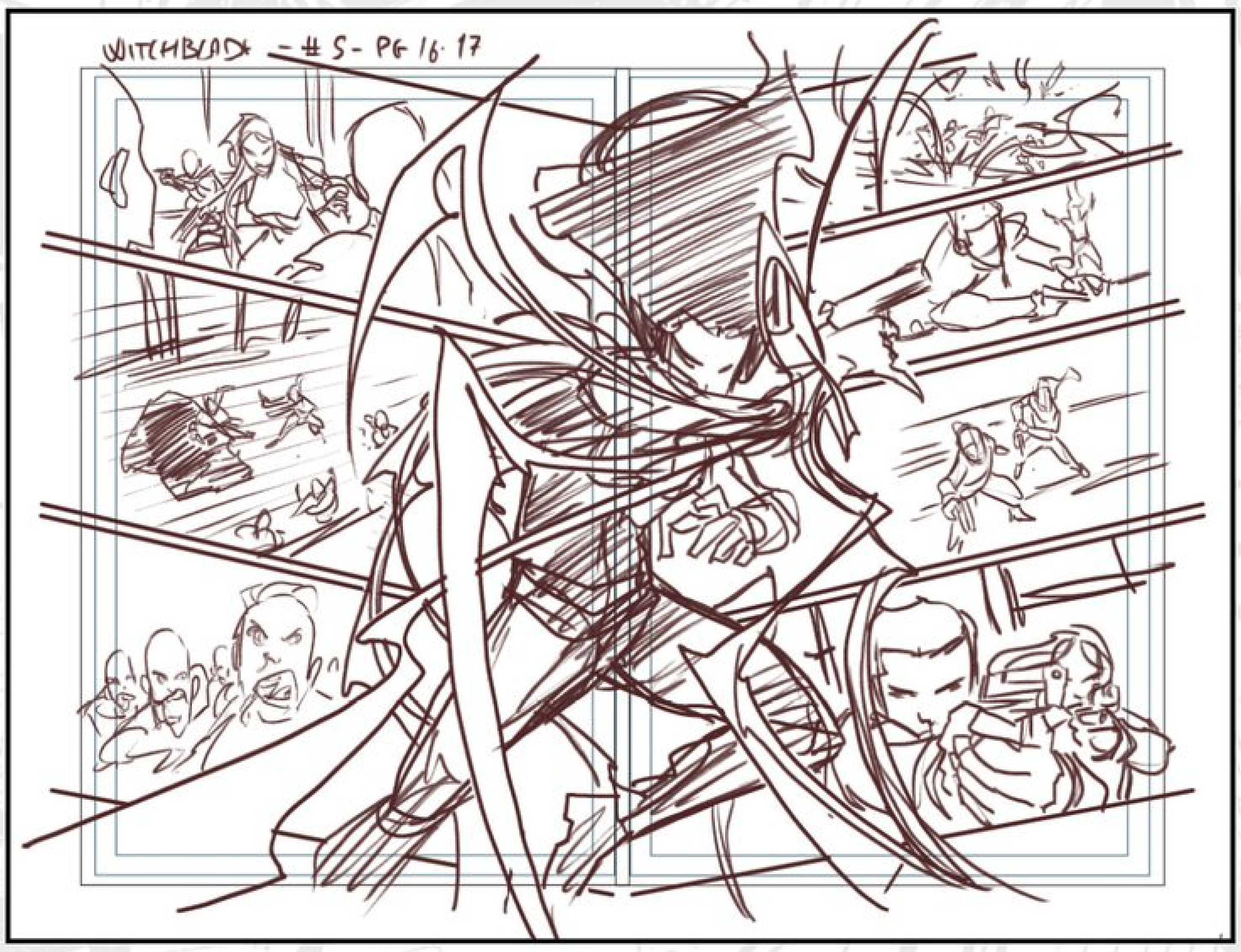
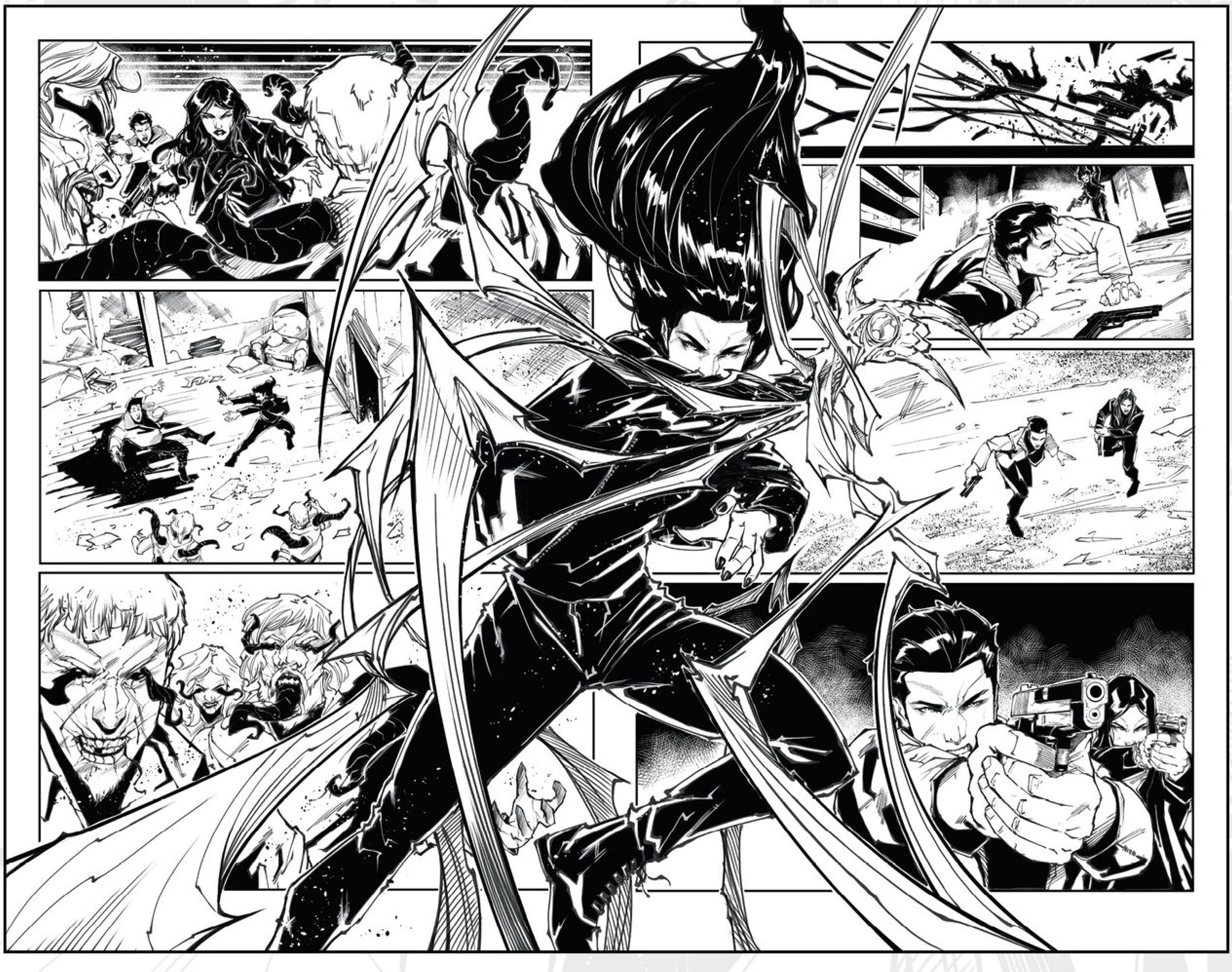
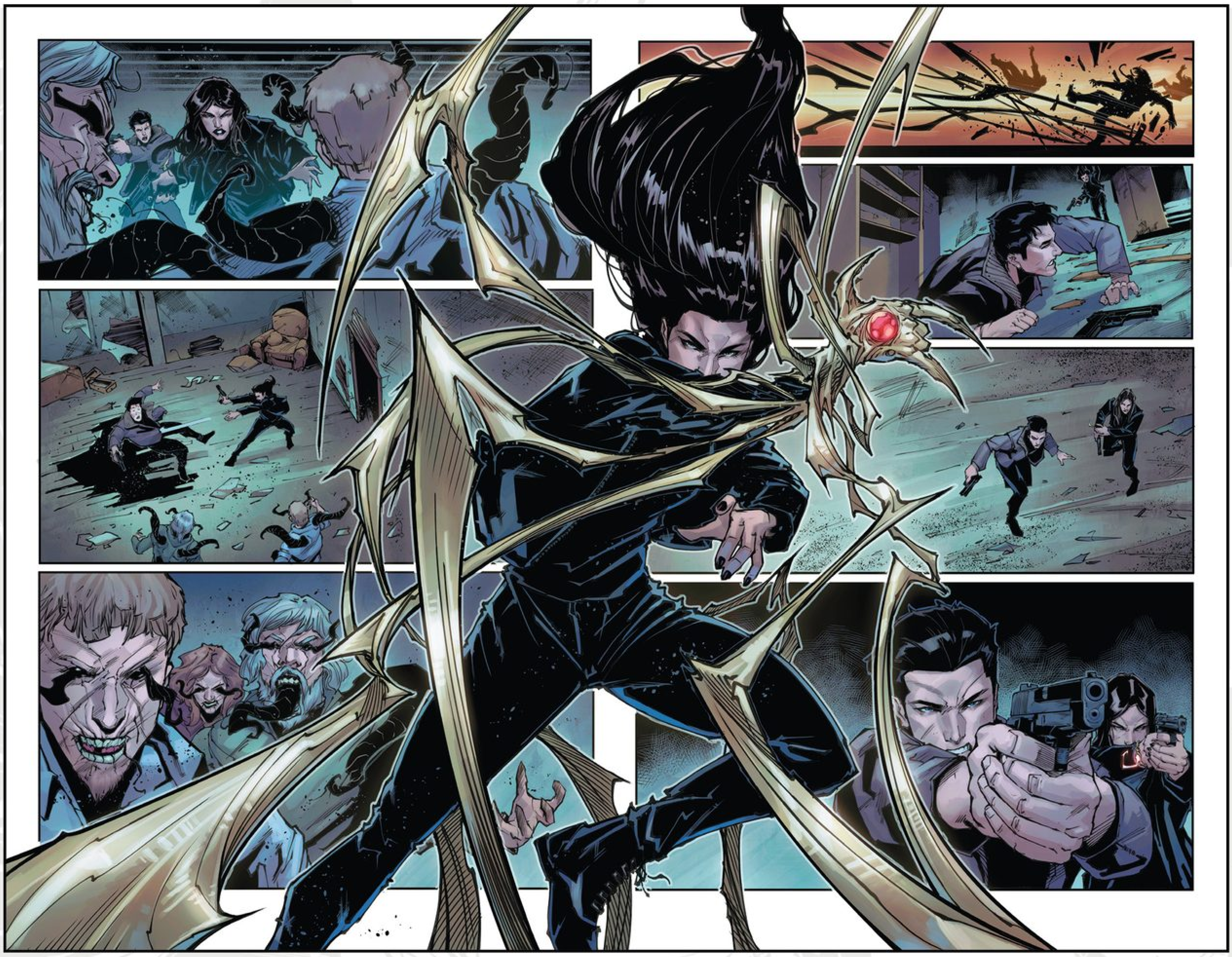
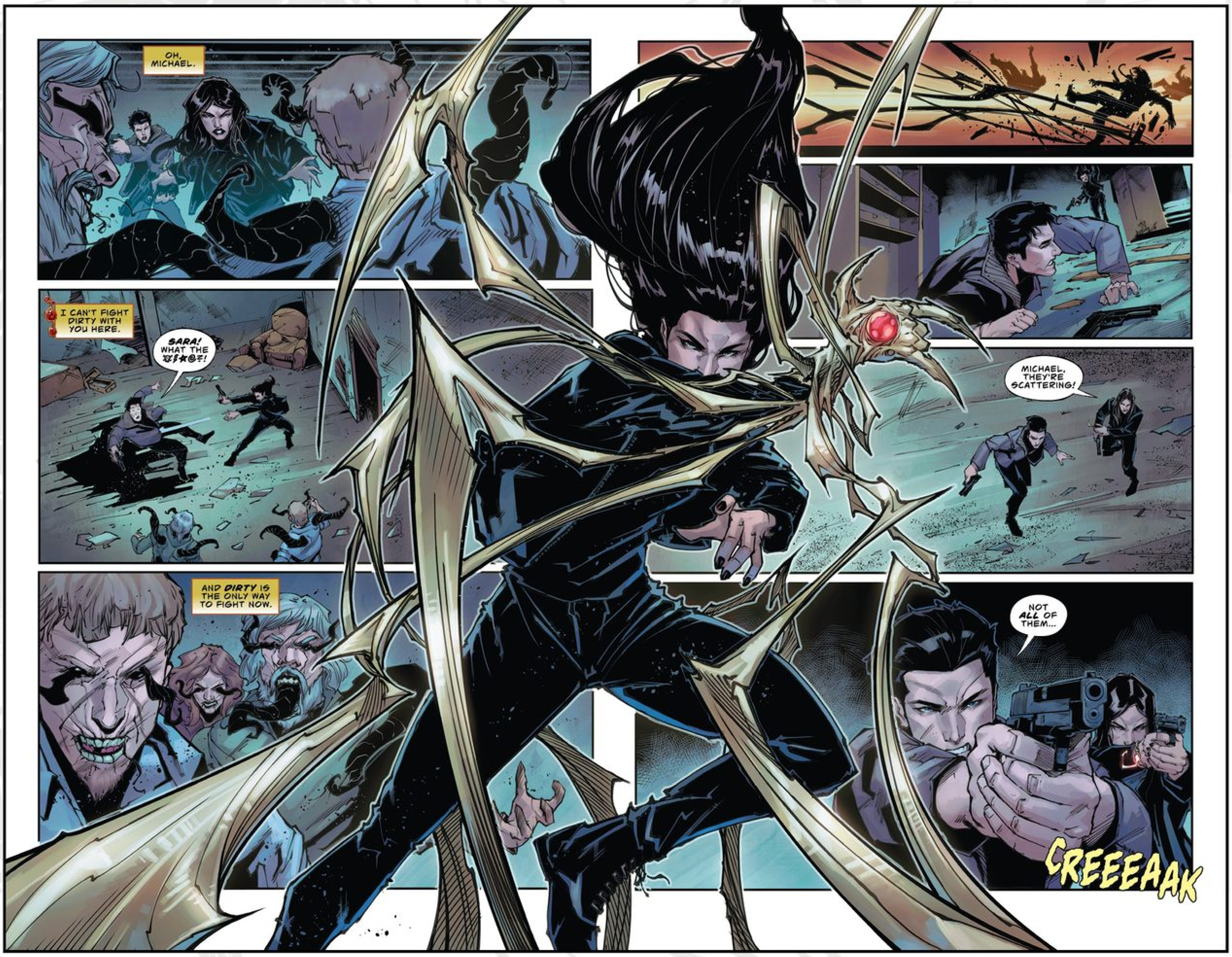
#5 Gallery • Page Process


WITCHBLADE - #5 - PG 16-17



Witchblade #5, pages 16-17, process from thumbnails, line art, colors to letters




OH, MICHAEL.
I CAN'T FIGHT DIRTY WITH YOU HERE.
SARA! WHAT THE ☒$★@₮!
AND **DIRTY** IS THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT NOW.
MICHAEL, THEY'RE SCATTERING!
NOT **ALL** OF THEM...
CREEEAAK

Creative Team

Marguerite Bennett is a GLAAD-nominated, New York Times-bestselling comic book writer based in Los Angeles.

Her credits include DC Comics' *Bombshells, Batwoman* and *RWBY*, along with *Animosity*, *Horde*, and *Insexts* through Aftershock Comics, and *MOTHER OF MADNESS* with *Game of Thrones* superstar Emilia Clarke for Image Comics. She has written *Might Morphin Power Rangers* for Boom Studios, *Josie and the Pussycats* through Archie, *A-Force* and *Years of Future Past* at Marvel, *Red Sonja* and *Sheena* from Dynamite, and the indie horror darling *The Lot* for Bad Idea.

She is the lead writer of *Ark: The Animated Series* from Studio Wildcard.

Giuseppe Cafaro is an Italian artist who is based in Caserta, Italy. He started his professional career with the Italian publisher GGStudio, and right after, in 2012, he started to work for Aspen Comics on books like *Soulfire, Fathom: Kiani* and *Trish out of Water*, and Zenescope Entertainment as a cover artist for several years.

He worked over the last 10 years with other publishers, like DC Comics, on *Suicide Squad* and *Catwoman*, and Dynamite Entertainment, on *Red Sonja* and *Vampirella*. He also worked on graphic novels for Boom Studios based on the *Power Rangers* franchise.

In 2021, he collaborated with Tim Seeley and Steve Orlando on *LOADED BIBLE* for Image Comics. Also, he worked on some short stories for Heavy Metal with Blake Northcott and with Phil Smith for the book *Brik Jones: Attorney for Earth*, for his publisher Fighting Lion Comics.

Arif Prianto followed his dreams of working in comics and began his career as a professional colorist in 2007. Since then he has worked on titles from Top Cow Productions, Inc on *WITCHBLADE, THE DARKNESS*, for DC on *Batman & The Joker, Dark Knights of Steel,* and for Marvel on *Venom* and *Spider Woman*. He says that coloring comics is "the best job ever!"

Troy Peteri has lettered everything from *The Avengers, Iron Man, Wolverine, Amazing Spider-Man* and *X-Men* to more recent titles such as *WITCHBLADE, CYBERFORCE,* and *Batman/Wonder Woman: The Brave & The Bold*.

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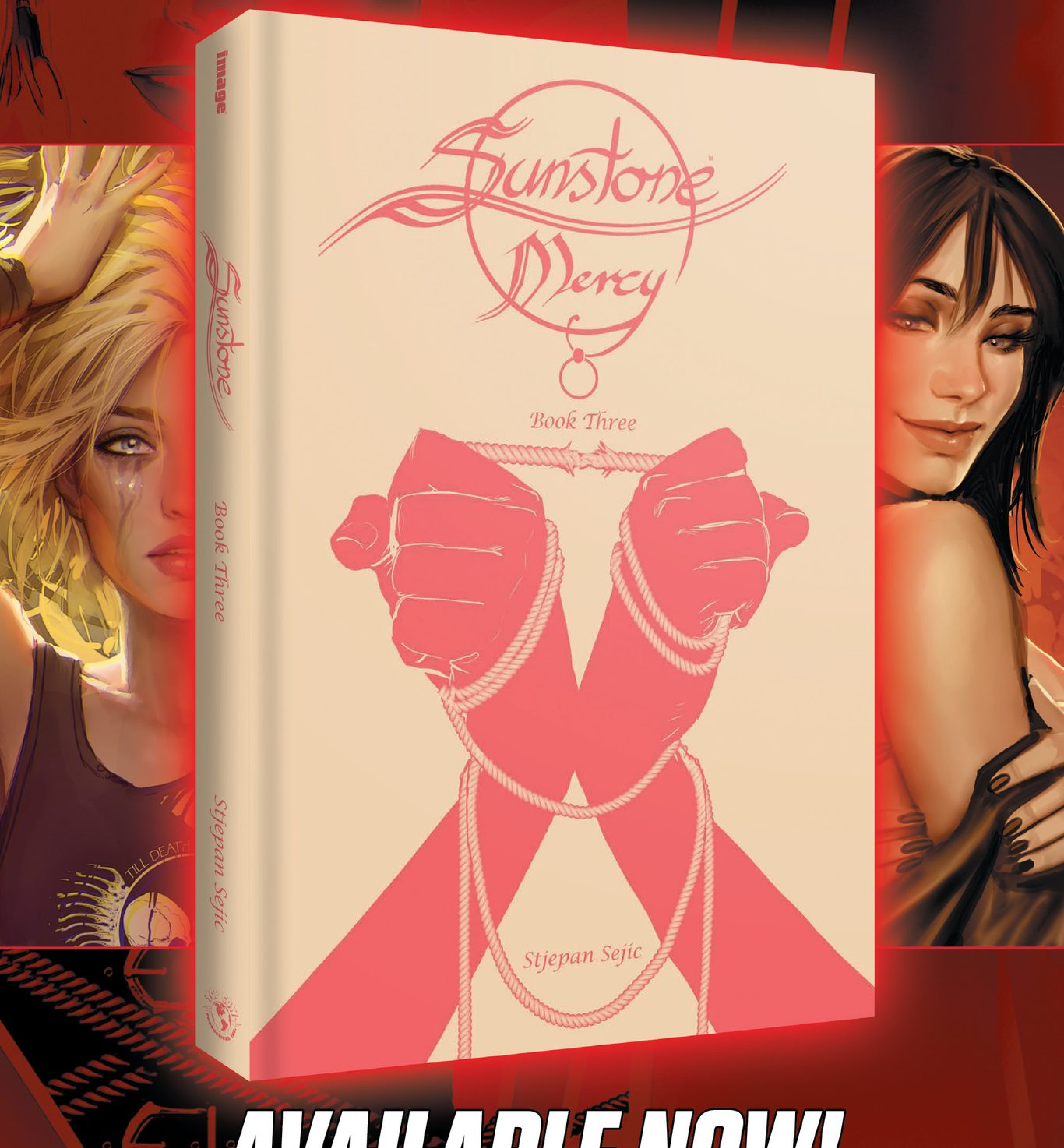
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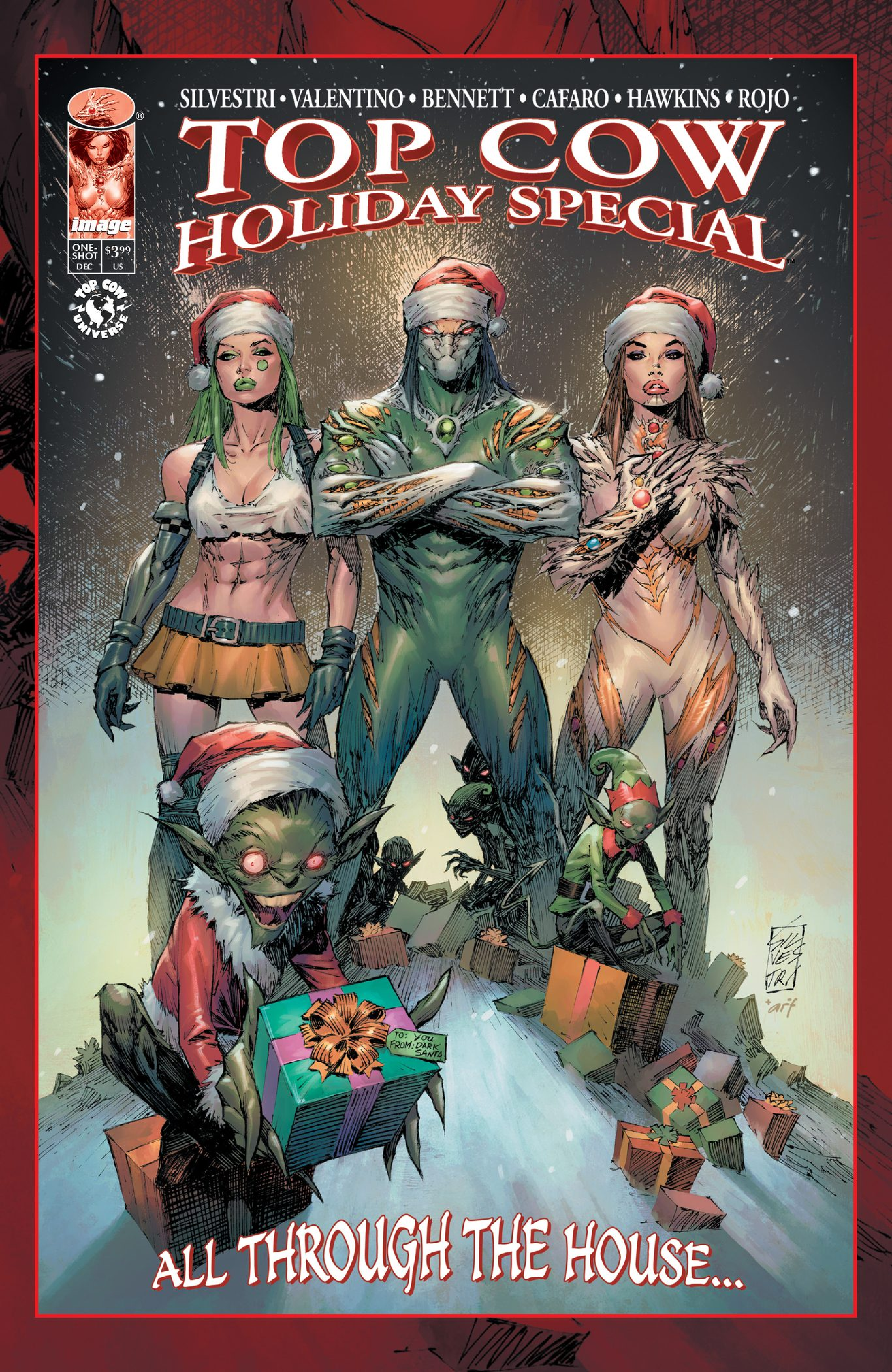
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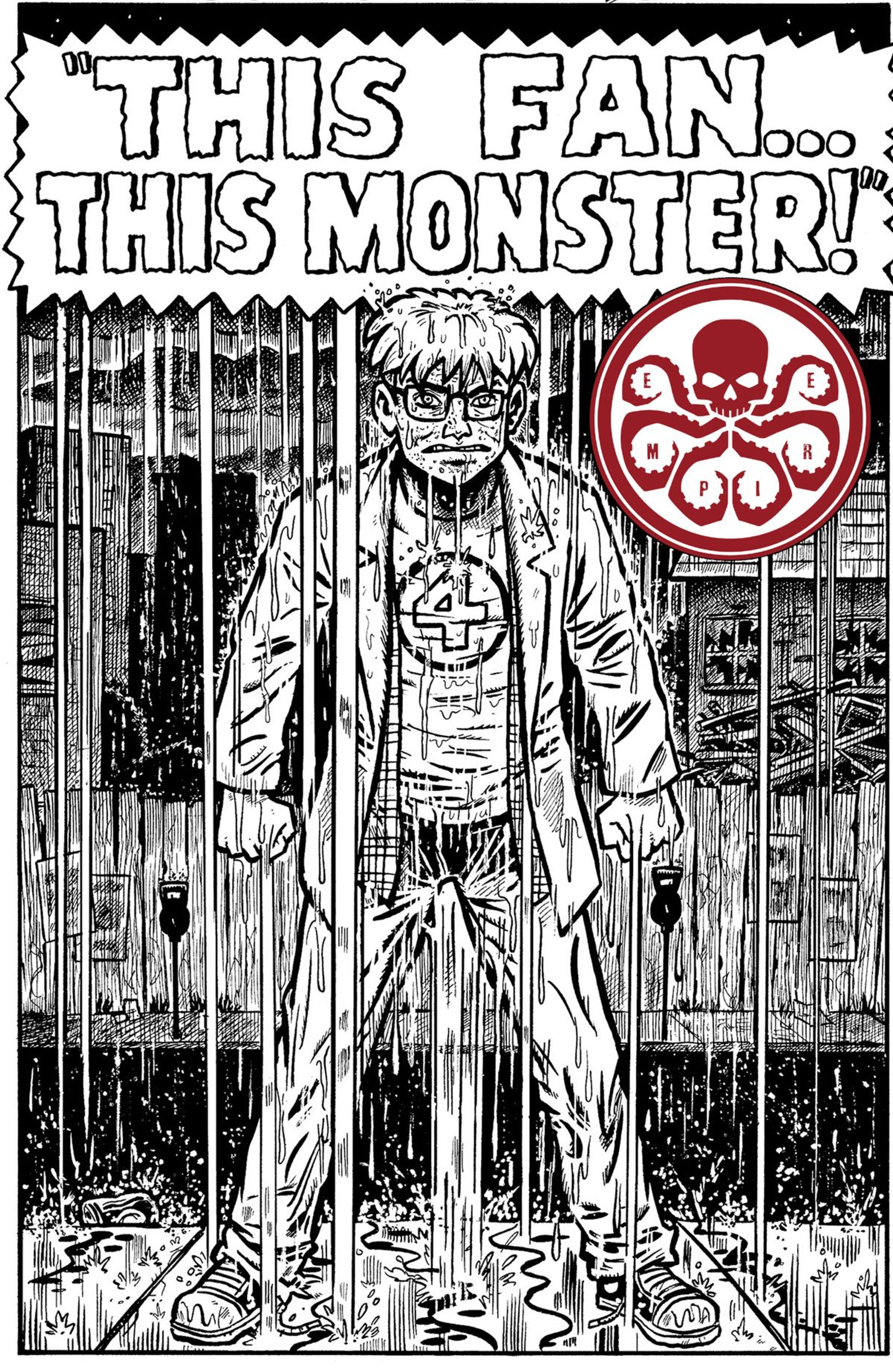
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